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HINDU

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A Study in Socio-Psychological  
and Ideological Foundations

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A Manual of Interviewing. Prepared for the UNESCO research  
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Measurement of Attitudes. A manual prepared for the UNESCO  
research investigators in Bombay, 1952 (out of stock).

Role of Mental Attitudes in Culture-Contact. Reprint, available  
from the author, 1954.

Social Effects of Urbanization on Industrial Workers in Bombay.  
Research sponsored by the UNESCO. UNESCO Research  
Centre, Calcutta, 1956.

Sociometry . (Reprint). Indian Journal of Social Work, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, June, 1958.

Sociometry and Psychodrama in India (Reprint). Group Psychotherapy, December 1959.

Social Psychology of Community Development : Presidential Address to the Social Psychology Section of the Fourth Indian Sociological Conference, Calcutta, 1959. Ind. J. Sod. Work, 21, 1 (June 1960).

Military Applications of Sociometry and Psychodrama . (Conf. on Military Psychology, Ministry of Defence, Landour, Mussoorie, June 1960). J. of Gujarat University, March-October, 1962.

Transactional Psychology and the Indian Approach. Presidential Address to the Psychology Section of the International Aca-

demy of Philosophy, First Triennial Session. Ahmedabad,  
February 1961. (In the press).

The State of Psychology as a Science Today. Presidential Address  
to the Section of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Golden  
Jubilee Session of the Indian Science Congress, 1963.

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A Study in Socio-Psychological  
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by

PANDHARINATH H. PRABHU

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To

the living memory  
of our departed daughter

Mrinaltni

– a promising life  
cut short early;

and

To

the memory  
of the author's Guru

Noshirwan A. Thoothi

who has made  
outstanding contribution  
towards the elucidation  
of the concept of Dharma  
in his book

“The Vaishnavas of Gujarat ”

“The dead , besides being infinitely more numerous than the  
living, are infinitely more powerful. They reign over the vast  
domain of the unconscious, that invisible domain which exerts its  
sway over all the manifestations of the intelligence and of character.  
A people is guided far more by its dead than by its living members.  
It is by its dead, and by its dead (done, that a race is founded.  
Century after century our departed ancestors have fashioned our  
ideas and sentiments and in consequence all the motives of our  
conduct. The generations that have passed away do not bequeath  
us their jdiysical constitution merely; they also bequeath us their  
thoughts. The dead are the only undisputed masters of the living.  
We bear the burden of their mistakes, we reap the reward of their

virtues''

– Gustave LeBon: The Psychology of Peoples  
(Quoted by H. P. Fairchild: General Sociology, p. 346)

## FOREWORD

By Dr. S. Radhakrishnan

Dr. Prabhu's book on "Hindu Social Institutions is, I believe, a serious and scientific account of Hindu social organization. It deals with the many topics of education, marriage, family, the place of women in Hindu society, the system of caste, with accurate learning and great discrimination. To all those who are now engaged in the task of revitalising Hindu practices and renovating Hindu society, the book will be indispensable.

We are today in the midst of a Hindu renaissance, waiting for a new SMRITI, which will emphasize the essentials of the Hindu spirit and effect changes in its forms so as to make them more relevant to the changing conditions of India and the world. Forms which begin by being useful are soon diverted from their objects to which they owe their existence to new ones where they are no longer of any use, where they even become dangerous. The task of the wise' reformer is to note the essential spirit of the institutions and reorient them so as to embody it better. For such a task a true understanding of Hindu social psychology and institutions is essential and this book provides us with a key : to it.

S. Radhakrishnan

CALCUTTA, August 12, 1939

•Now entitled Hindu Social Organization.

## XII Preface to the First Edition

statement may lend itself to be viewed from different points of view in different connections^or contexts.

It is a matter of great delight for me to acknowledge my intel-

lectual and spiritual indebtedness to my teachers, two of whom I would specially like to mention here: Mr. K. S. Parulekar not only took personal interest in the progress of my studies, but has also always favoured me with his encouragement and counsel. It has always proved instructive and delightful for me to discuss with him various problems of human life and conduct. And I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. N. A. Thoothi for his personal guidance, encouragement, assurance and advice.

My indebtedness to scriptural texts and other writings is indicated specifically in the footnotes throughout the body of the work. Perhaps it could never become possible for an author to trace and identify the various sources from which his knowledge has been gradually derived and built up; and therefore my indebtedness to others must be much greater than I could possibly point out. However, I need hardly say that in regard to the views, interpretations and opinions expressed in the following pages and their shortcomings, the responsibility is entirely mine.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan for blessing this work with a Foreword, in the midst of and in spite of great pressure of work.

Pandhabinath H. Prabhu

BOMBAY, September, 1939

Extracts from

#### PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

r T'he book is an attempt, probably the first one of its kind, to  
\*\*■ discover the essentials^ of Hindu social thought and orga-  
nization from a rather, wide variety of sources and to coordinate  
them into a, foundation frame-work for a systematic Indian sociology  
and social psychology. At fhe time that the book was first published  
in 194Q\* the subject of Indian Sociology as such was not accorded  
any particular attention in our Universities, excepting in one or two  
in which serious teaching and studies in the subject had already  
commenced. Since the publication of the book, however, the sub-  
ject has come into ittf own as a full and independent paper for  
study in the graduate and postgraduate classes in many Universities.  
While the author doeis not wish to claim credit for the book for this  
change in outlook and Emphasis in our Universities, the systematic  
presentation' of Hindu social thought as attempted in the book has  
probably given some impetus to that outlook. At the same time,  
this placed a certain responsibility on the shoulders of the author

which prevented him from issuing a mere reprint of the work, when the first edition went out of print some years back, without carefully revising the work. Such revision was delayed, however, from time to time, owing to the intervention of unforeseen circumstances. And now, even though he has been able to bring out this revision, he is only too conscious of the shortcomings that still exist in the work. The subject is rather vast, and perhaps every chapter of the work could be expanded into a book, and some more aspects and issues also could be included in the treatise.

It is perhaps needless to say that our reference to an 'Indian Sociology' should not be taken to imply that we believe in a number of 'sociologies', one each for its country of origin; what we merely mean to imply is that social thought in India has had its own peculiar lines of development which we have attempted to present in this work.

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#### Preface to the Second Edition

To the critics and readers of the first edition of this book, I am deeply grateful for the keen interest they evinced in the work and the appreciative comments they offered, in some cases spontaneously. He is particularly grateful to Professor Ramchandra D. Ranade, former Professor of Philosophy and Vice-Chancellor at Allahabad University for his kind and personal encouragement; to Professor Rao Bahadur K. V. Rangaswami Aiyengar, former Director of Sri Venkateswara Oriental Institute, Tirupati and Manindra Professor of Indian Culture at Banaras Hindu University, and to the late Professor Edward A. Ross, of Wisconsin University, U.S.A., each for carefully going through the work and sending in details his appraisal of the same.

The author was struck by the reactions which were aroused on the publication of the first edition of the work in the two sections of scholars, the 'orthodox' and the 'reformers'. Both of them have generally appreciated the work, in varying degrees; but some of the former group have tended to think that he has not been as warm and as pronounced as he should have been in upholding Hindu cultural heritage and in denouncing the Western ways; while some from the latter group have felt that he has not been as strong as he should have been in denouncing some of the aspects of our 'old' social behaviour and in pleading for fresh ideas and progress! On his own part, however, the author has never consciously entertained the notion either of upholding or denouncing any ways, Indian or Western, but has tried to present as faithful a portrayal as possible of the Hindu social thought, psychology and organization.

Pandhahinath H. Prabhu

BOMBAY, April, 1954

#### PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION

A dvantage has been taken of the opportunity to bring out a third edition of the work and to make a few modifica-tions in the material. The author is grateful to the readers of the book from various parts of the world who have conveyed their appreciation and comments on it to him. He is particularly beholden to the famous German social scientist, Leopold von Wiese, for honouring the work by writing a special article on it in KYKLOS: An International Review for Social Sciences (1955, Fasc. 1 pp. 72-84)

Pandharinath H. Prabhu

BOMBAY, December, 1958

#### A WORD ON THE FOURTH EDITION

r Le present edition includes a few modifications, but mainly remains the same as before. In spite of the keen desire of the author to make a thorough revision, pressure of work has pre-vented him from undertaking the task

Errors discovered in the last edition have been corrected m this edition, and a few additions have been made.

Pandharinath H. Prabhu

University School of Psychology,

Education and Philosophy,

Gujarat University.

Ahmedabad 9

February 1963



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HINDU

## SOCIAL

## ORGANIZATION

A Study in Socio-Psychological  
and Ideological Foundations

## CHAPTER I

## PROLOGUE

THE present study is an attempt towards constructing a picture of the Hindu social organization and institutions from the point of view of their socio-psychological foundations and implications. It will be the effort of the writer to think out and follow as closely as possible along the lines of the Hindu thought and tradition and to portray and interpret, so far as one can, both analytically and synthetically, the Hindu scriptures and theories in their proper and original perspective and setting

It may be objected that such a study, which more or less purports to unearth the past, would prove of no use for us of the present age of science and speed. However, even if it is suspected that a study of the past institutions of India is not likely to be helpful towards the organization and control of our present social life, this has to be studied, demonstrated and proved, before the utter uselessness and sure failure of the same can be taken for granted, in the spirit of true science, devoid of prejudice. We believe that such categorical assumptions on the part of social "reformers" are as much dogmatic as are the assumptions of the "orthodox" in regard to their faith in the infallibility of the Sastras. For though it is quite true that some of the problems that confront our present day society may not have been even thought of by our forefathers, it is probable that similar if not the same problems may have been faced by them, and the solutions to these, as formulated by them in the past, if not in themselves useful, may at least serve to suggest solutions towards unravelling and management of the problems we have to face today. We may thus be led on to follow our ancestors in principles and spirit, if not in details, to our advantage, particularly if we discover that the spirit which goaded them to social action was inspired by proper and desirable motives and understanding. We may, to say the least about it, learn not to commit the mistakes committed by our kith and kin during the past, if we come to know how and why they came to

## Hindu Social Organization

be committed. Thus, lessons from the past may serve as caution-signals for the future. This in itself would prove to be a sufficiently adequate reward yielded by the careful study of our past social institutions, brought into existence and nurtured by our forefathers to solve the problems of their own times.

This would be, we admit, only a negative result of our study. But there will also be a positive side of such a study which cannot be gainsaid. It may, on the positive side, give us clues to future revision and reconstruction of a social order. For, the study of the past enables us to grasp the fundamental psychology behind the present problems and the attitudes that uphold or reject them due to which it has come to be what it is. We may thus be enabled to make out the causes and circumstances imbedded in the past, which led to the existence and conditions of things and events they stand today. And, these valuable clues, conditions and causes are sure to prove themselves of great help to us in the making of and planning for our future.

We are sometimes given to regard with disdain and contempt the ideas and ideals of the ancients in the social and moral fields. We are apt to think that each new social problem must be tackled and solved afresh, and that the past is not going to be of the least assistance to us here. We may feel, that the "New Generation " has new problems to be faced quite unprecedented by anything to resemble them at any time before, and fresh solutions ought to be invented in order to deal with them. The enthusiastic social worker clamours for introduction of new ideas and ideals in the social and moral fields and insists on cutting off the old ideas and ideals to the root. In this, he is forgetting the great lesson of social psychology, viz., that what has gamed the very depths of the soul of a people through ages past is well-nigh impossible to be uprooted at a short notice, sometimes even by efforts carried on for several generations. The people have to be educated, and their minds prepared, for discarding older ideas that have been found to be really harmful; and they thus have to be led gradually and by degrees to favour new ideas. To be able to do this effectively, the social reformer must be able to drive home to the people the actual and real harms and evils, if there are any, wrought by a persisting past. And, there is no better way of doing this than to lay bare before the people their past traditions, trace their roots and growth, and

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demonstrate 'their results.

But this is not all. There are reasons why the enthusiastic social reformer should not clamour for introduction of newer ideas and ideals in the moral and social fields every now and then. He could ill afford to forget another great lesson of social history, viz , what has been able to stand the test of time for ages past and is yet alive and has been regulating the social order till this day may have at least some merit in it which is worthy of examination. We cannot resist here the temptation to quote at length a modern sociologist on the value and significance of the past. "The world has been a great experimental laboratory," wrote Professor Carver of Harvard University, "in the moral and social field. A great many 'new discoveries' are made in the field of morals; most of them have no survival value and they perish, or the people who try them perish, which amounts to the same thing. Once in a great while a 'new discovery' is made which happens to work. A new system of morals or a new religion is born which fits its devotees for survival, and a new moral force is introduced into the world. That is, however, a poor argument in favour of adopting every new moral idea which is proclaimed. Most of them really are wrong in principle because they won't work. Only a few have shown any survival value. Most of the 'new' ones have been tried and have been proved unworkable. If we knew as much as our great experimenters in physical science knew, we should learn not to repeat the same failures over and over again. That is one reason why persons with a historical perspective are generally conservative. At least they do not proclaim that they are willing to try anything once. A monkey is willing to do that. A real sociologist knows that many of these so called schemes have already been tried many times and have always failed."

"It is chastening for any group of mortals to know the whole story," Professor Carver proceeds to observe, "because they know then that the way they behave in their land and in their generation is not the only possible way to squeeze satisfaction out of living or necessarily the best way. They acquire a healthy, eager, inquisitive, exploring attitude towards morality. They know that morals must change to keep pace with a changing world. And so they learn the value of moral inventiveness. But they learn, too, that they cannot look very far into the future to see the far flung consequences of

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change. And so they learn also the value of standing pat by ancient wisdom in the matter of morals, of experimenting with care and circumspection. They know that 'whatever is' in the moral world is not necessarily right; but only possesses an actuarial probability of being right because of the fact that it has survived the best of time, – of moral selection."

On the other hand, "moral innovations we must have if there is to be progress ." 1 The main reasons in favour of moral innovations are two: First, the old mores may be altogether unsatisfactory and may have always been such in many particulars; or/ and secondly, if the human environment changes in terms of culture-contacts, the mores need to be modified, altered or even changed for the proper functioning of new life-values. Thus "group ways of behaving have to be altered in order to be continuously adapted to the changing life conditions a group must face ." 2

Therefore, in the present essay, we shall endeavour to visualize in details the basic conditioning factors that ruled not only the earlier phases of Indian culture and civilization, but have gone so deep into the social psychology of the Hindus that they continue to dominate his life and conduct, in a large measure, even to this day. This outlook and method may considerably save us from thoughtlessly rejecting the best of our past heritage; besides, if change is deemed necessary, we may, in the light of the insight thus acquired by us into the intricacies of our cultural fabric and psychology, be enabled to think out, devise, decide upon and adopt ways, conventions, ideas and ideals, new in themselves, yet in harmony with the spirit of the old; and even if a rejection of the old is found necessary, the synthetic attitude of detailed analysis and scrutiny which we adopt in our understanding of the old and the new will contribute a great deal towards an even and wise selection, adoption and assimilation of strange mores for the proper rejuvenation and nurture of the life of our people.

Moreover, a study of the social institutions and organization of the Hindus as deduced from their scriptures will give us definite glimpses of what may be called the ideological and valuational foundations of those social institutions. For, the *Iṣṭaśāstra* and

1. T. N. Carver : The Essential Factors of Social Evolution, pp. 254-256.

2, Ibid „ p. 256.

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other scriptural literature of the Hindus seeks to deal not only with what is, but also with what ought to be. Not only actual individuals and actual human groups living in a particular country and during a specific period in which they were written, but also ideal individuals and ideal human relationships conceived as true and beneficial for any people, in any age and in any clime, in general and broadly, form the subject matter of the Hindu Sastras. In other words, the Hindu social thinkers have given us theories of social institutions and organization, what they should be and ought to be. That is to say, they have thought out and portrayed social and individual ideals. And it is important for us to know this aspect of theorizing done by the Hindu social thinkers. For, it will be then that we shall be able to examine whether and how far the present Hindu social institutions conform to or deviate from their original conceptions and spirit in the actual forms they have assumed today. And, in this manner we may be enabled to grasp the fundamental spirit, the fundamental ideology, in terms of which the Hindu's social institutions were conceived, and thus may be enabled even to mark off the distance and difference between this ideology and the actualities to which the people of India have given existence and shape.

We should like to point out here that most of these basic ideas have been very widely held by all Hindus – the rich as well as the poor, the learned as well as the lay, the city men as well as the village folk. And, it is really astounding to witness this phenomenon in a country, viz., the geographical India (now divided into India and Pakistan) which is a sub-continent by itself and is so vast and varied in geographic conditions, ecology and sub-cultures for centuries past. The total population of the sub-continent equals that of China; and the population of India alone equals that of U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. put together. 5 Writing in 1951, Kingsley Davis observed: 3 4

“With now over 280 million adherents in geographical India, not to mention a few million in other places, Hinduism holds third place among the world's great religions, being exceeded in numbers

3. Spate, O. H. K. : India and Pakistan, 2nd Ed. London ; Methuen, 1957, p. 97.

4. Davis, Kingsley : The Population of India and Pakistan, Princeton, New

Jersey, Princeton Univ. Pr., 1961, p. 178.

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only Jby Christians and Confuciansfs-Taoists.

“Because of its pervasive influence and its complex nature, there is no single criterion by which Hinduism may be defined. It can be distinguished from other religions only by multiple criteria, most of which are useless for census purposes but which nevertheless give meaning to the census figures. On the level of its supernatural content it possesses three outstanding characteristics: first, a doctrine of radical immanence (pantheism) which finds God in everything; second, a tendency toward tolerant syncretism, which allows it to incorporate almost any ritual or deity into its own system; and third, a complex conception of individual destiny, contained in the doctrine' of karma, reincarnation, and moksha. On the level of its social content – that is, its manifestation in social behaviour – Hinduism becomes even more distinct. To an exceptional degree it is bound up with a specific social order, the outstanding institutions of which are the caste system, the joint family, and the rural village (themselves mutually related and inter-dependent) . Indeed, since it is this order to which its supernatural content refers, the social system forms the fundamental basis of Hindu Unity.”

It may also be noted here that according to the last Census taken in 1951 in India, 295 million or 82.7% of the total population of the country live in villages while 61.9 million or only 17.3% live in cities and towns. Again, in terms of population, the Hindu population constitutes about one-eighth of the whole of humanity living on earth.

Sir Herbert Risley, who was the Director of Ethnography and Census Commissioner in India for several years, was struck by this phenomenon and remarked in his book *The People of India* : ‘These ideas are not the monopoly of the learned; they are shared in great measure by the man in the street If you talk to a fairly intelligent Hindu peasant about the Paramatma, Karma , Maya, Mukti, and so forth, you will find, as soon as he gets over his surprise at your interest in such matters, that the terms are familiar to him, and that he has formed a rough theory of their bearing on his own future .” 5

5. H. Risley : The People of India f Thacker Spink & Co., Calcutta, Bombay, & London, 2nd Ed. 1915, p. 244.

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Therefore, the present writer's aim, in the main, will be to describe ideas, ideals and aspirations so as to re-set and reconstruct the several strata of the social structure that have been evolving in Hindu life and conduct. Social institutions will thus reveal themselves as the scaffolding around which the actual modes of living of the Hindus are being built up, organized and replenished from time to time. These social institutions, like anywhere else, have been the outcome of the necessities of life, and have had the advantage of deep social thinking behind them. In this sense, they have come into being neither haphazardly, anyhow, nor by themselves, that is to say, they are not evolved merely in the natural course of things without any deliberative bases. Further, it should not necessarily be presumed that these well thought-out institutions are against the requirements of the natural evolution of social life and institutions. Moreover, these institutions are so vitally related to each other, that each of them gathers its place and meaning in terms of specific inter-relational values between them. They are devised to enable man, so far as can be, to reduce definite ideas, ideals and purposes into concrete human conduct and affairs. As such, they serve as tools for the best possible unfolding of human capacities, conduct and co-operation. In such series of infinite adjustments between the actual and the ideal, the social thinkers and the law-givers of the Hindus, whatever their failure or success, have been trying more and more to define life, its meaning and end, as also to give man new tools of life, more varied and efficient, in order that they may, by using them, live according to these ideals in actual conduct and affairs, personal and social. It is from such points of view that the problem of the basis and structure of social institutions is considered here, so that the comparative workability of these, their virtues or qualities, their shortcomings and also the causes of these may be located and defined. Along with this, a general estimate of the social system of the Hindus and of the social institutions within it in terms of inter-relations, will be made for the clear and definite apprehension of their life-designs.

While attempting this, it was occasionally found necessary to distinguish the system of the principles governing Hindu social institutions and the ideas and ideals which gave rise to them in comparison with – not mainly in order to seek or assert contradiction with – systems of ideas and ideals other than the Hindu,



## Hindu Social Organization

\* f

especially the Western. This is done in view of the fact that Indian Social Heritage is being displaced by Western cultural ideals and institutions. Besides, there is a complaint by some contemporary leaders that such rejection of our own culture has been introducing and injecting into our lives, not the best of the culture of the West, but perhaps its worst. There is a great deal of truth in this complaint. But this should not mean that the Western thought, ideals, social structure and psychology are, in the opinion of the present writer, in themselves unworthy or at fault. It only demonstrates the difficulties of absorbing another intricate and historically evolved culture, life and ideas by a historic people through the media of its literature and books, rather than by living in close association and comradeship with the peoples of that culture. Intellectual understanding and fascination of mores of other people are admirable; but, by themselves, they prove invariably foreign to the genius of a different people that seek to absorb them.

This does not mean that there should be no cultural assimilation and contact between the peoples of the world. In fact, that is the ideal which has provoked the writer of this work to find out and study the best and the noblest of the Indian heritage in terms of the Indian social institutions and organization and the psychology underlying the same, in order that these may be conserved and preserved at their best, not merely to serve the needs of future Indian life, but also, to whatever extent, guide and direct the life of humanity at large, so that ultimately with co-operation, goodwill and real mutual understanding, the peoples of the world. East, West, North and South, may one day learn and adopt the best from wherever it comes and by whomsoever it is offered. It should be understood, therefore, that the present inquiry is essentially in the nature of self-search, self-chastisement and self-guidance and not of fault-finding with other cultures, systems, valuations and outlooks. Nor is there any presupposition that culture contact and cultural give-and-take are in themselves unworthy of assimilation. On the other hand, this is an attempt at finding out, in the midst of an anarchy of life-values and medley of points of view which not only India but the whole world has been facing in our days, what and how the thinker of old India has thought about these issues in terms of a Social Psychology, and the social institutions which expressed and served it.

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On the other hand, let it be noted that the present writer believes in every people evolving a historical entity of its own, a personality, a genius, a psychology of its own, through which the nature and meaning and purpose of life unfolds itself into the so many facets that go to make the jewels of human existence. It is therefore that the present writer does not see any opposition or contradiction – in fact he does not believe that there need be any opposition or contradiction – between one theory of life and another, between one frame of mind and another, between one set of life-values and another, not only within the orbit of the life of the same people but even between the orbits of the life of different peoples, not only in the same climate but even in different climatic conditions, not only in any single period of history but even in different periods of epochs in history, not only in the same level of culture but even between different levels of culture. In view of this, therefore, this work may be taken as an attempt to provide an analytical and synthetical study of one of these facets, as a humble contribution to assist mutual exchange of thought, towards the making of a system of thought, outlook, life and understanding between the peoples of the world as members of that Great Society called Humanity!®

\$ \* \* \*

The sources of the understanding of Hindu social institutions that is attempted here are many and various. These include the Vedic literature, the Epics, the Puranic literature, the Sutra literature, the drama, the poetry, and the vast store house of folk-tales. It may prove useful at this stage to speak a word about some at

6. Cf. The following from Professor Gardner Murphy, an eminent social psychologist of America : “Although we have been looking at cultures which historically belong to peoples with white skin, there is no reason whatever to believe that cultures remain the exclusive or distinctive property of those among whom they have developed. Western ideas and Soviet ideas are penetrating everywhere, and it is to be expected that the ideas of China, India, and of countless other nations will be deeply assimilated by our own descendants in a century or less. Perhaps the family unity and consequent security feelings so characteristic of China and Japan, the sense of oneness with nature so characteristic of India, and many other sources of strength and satisfaction can be viably grafted on

into our own make-up." – Gardner Murphy : Personality – A Bio-Socud Approach to Origins and Structure. New York, Harper & Bros., 1947, pp. 911-12.

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least of the sources which are being utilised in the pages that follow.

Two of the most important groups of sources dealing with ideas of great sociological significance are the epics, – Rumayana and the Mahabharata , – and the Sutras , viz., the Gnhyasutras and the Dharma-Sutras , or Dharma-Sustras, as they are usually called. As for the Rarwayana, which deals with the earlier epoch, we may say that the best and the noblest of the Hindu traditions and ideals of the times during, before and after it was written, are worked out in the personalities of Rama, Slta, Lakshmana, Hanuman and others. In a sense, this epic is a Hindu Criticism of Life. It is difficult to say how far the original Rdmayar.a, has been making and moulding Hindu life and mind through history; but it is obvious that the Hindi version of Tulsidas and also other versions had and have been having a hold over millions of men and women in India. Rama is definitely worshipped as an Avatara, an incarnation of God, by them; and his life is considered as mirroring the ideal and the holy and the divine in human life, institutions, ideology, and practices.

The Mahabharata is another work of immense sociological value. Though this epic describes the war fought about 1,000 B.C., 7 and as such it is mainly concerned with the events connected with two contending families of the Kuru dynasty, it gives minute details and principles concerning the laws, life and conditions which existed and controlled human conscience and destiny during a period much before the war was actually fought. According to some authorities, the epic in its present form was being knit up by several writers between about the 4th century B.C. and the 4th century A.D., mainly in accordance with the traditions much older than when it was being written. 8 But the fact that it came to be written finally centuries after the events described therein took place, should justify the contention that at least a part of the background of the social traditions described therein must also belong to contemporary life and thought, that is, to the social conditions, beliefs and practices prevalent during the long period of about a thousand years during which the epic was forming or formed itself. And since

7\* See Comb. Hist, of Ind., Ed. by E. J. Rapsom, Vol. I, Ch. XIII, p. 307.

a See Camb. Hist of Ind., Vol. I, Ch. XI p, 258, cf. also Dunbar : A

of p. 33 : Wntemitz : A Hist of Ind. IMj Vol I (Tr. by Mr\*. S. Ketkar) .

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400 A.D. to our own days, the Mahdbhdrata has been and continues to be regarded with high reverence by the Hindu as a great authority on religious, moral and social matters. 9 Indeed, the orthodox Hindus have been regarding it as the fifth Veda; and, in view of this, the epic is put at least on the same level of authority as the Dharma-Sdstras. In fact, inscriptional evidence proves that it was classed with the Dharma-Sdstras as early as the fifth century A.D. 10

The Grihya-Sutras deal in the main with the domestic conduct and life of the Hindu. On the other hand, the Dharma-Sutras, also known as the Smntis, treat mainly of the social conduct and life of the Hindu. Together, the two, mutually considered, prove to be rich sources of information for us with regard to almost every phase of life of the Hindu in the domestic, social, political, economic, moral and religious spheres. Moreover, they deal with almost all the phases of Hindu life as conceived by them. Even the minutest aspects of a Hindu's family life are described and defined by them to a degree that is astounding. Such a wealth of elaborate details is given in these scriptures that there is hardly any phase of human life, day in and day out, as the Hindu conceives it, that is left untouched by them. The Sutra period is placed between about 600 B.C. to 200 B.C. 11 But as with the Mahabhd-rata , so with the Sutras: the descriptions of social living and relationships narrated in these latter works also represent facts relating to a much earlier as well as of much later period, in addition to the conditions during the period in which they were composed. Indeed, many of the practices and injunctions regarding Hindu social life in the Sutras have literally been functioning even in contemporary Hindu life. In fact, the spirit of the Sutras may be said to be governing the general tone and tenor of the domestic

9. Says Wintemitz : "The very fact that Mahdbhdrata represents a wkok -literature rather than one single unified work and contains so many and so multifarious things, makes it more suited than any other book, to afford us an insight into the deepest depths, of the soul of the Indian people" (A Hist, of Ind. Lit., Tr. by Mrs. S. Ketkar, Vol. I, pp. 326-27)

And Macdonell remarks that the epic has become “so much overgrown with didactic matter that it could hardly be regarded as an epic at all, and has rather taken the place of a moral encyclopaedia in Indian literature (India's Past, p. 86).

10. Macdonell : Ibid., p. 89.

11. Dunbar: op. cit , p. 33; Comb. Hist, of India, Vol. I.

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and social behaviour of the Hindu, to a large extent, even to this day.

Now, the whole material and moral universe with which the individual has to deal in this world is classified by the Hindu into three big realms, viz., Dharma, Artha and Kama , which may be translated, briefly and conveniently, as moral and ideal needs, material needs, and the needs of senses; or the moral, material and the sensual needs of man; or the needs of the soul, the needs of material prosperity, and the psycho-biological needs of the flesh. In modern terminology, these are the three principal motivating forces or urges or drives around which the whole life and conduct of man could be comprehended. And therefore, the management and conduct of his social and individual life is conceived and formulated in terms of these three, with reference to the ultimate end of life viz., Moksha .

We shall further explain and amplify the meaning and implications of these terms in the next two chapters. In accordance with the division of the problems of life into Dharma , Artha and Kama , we have three groups of Sastras or “scientific treatises / 5 each dealing with one of these three life-purposes in the main, viz., the Dharma-Sastra, the Artha-Sastra and the Kama-Sastra ; and the whole literature of the Hindu dealing with facts and theories of sociological value could broadly be classified under these three Sastras . It is noteworthy that the consideration and treatment of all the problems under these three headings was undertaken and designated as “Sastra” as a scientific pursuit, by the Hindu thinkers.

Further, as has been opined by Manu, the management and conduct of life should be conceived and formulated in terms of harmonious co-ordination, or the proportionate aggregate of these three ( Trivarga ) classes of life-needs, or urges, or principal motives . 12 Therefore, the three kinds of Sastras also have to be studied alongside with each other. They are not to be studied as

separate and unconnected treatises, but as keys together to the problems of life. Moreover, the literature belonging to any one of these three Sastras does not entirely exclude all considerations regarding the other two, but only deals with them secondarily. Thus, though the Dharma-Sdstras, for instance, deal in the main and in

12. Man. ii. 224.

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details with the ways and methods of Dharma, the other two sides of the problem of living concerning Artha and Kama are also touched by them at many places. So it is with the ArthaSdstra and the Kdmasdstra.

Of these three Sdstras, or sciences of life, we have already referred to the DharmaSdstras and their sociological importance. Among the second kind of these Sdstras, viz., the ArthaSdstra, we may here refer to the ArthaSdstra of Kautilya as one of the important sources with reference to our problem. This ArthaSdstra, besides generally reasserting the earlier social codes and practices, provides new and important material for clues to understand the social changes that took place in later times. Another invaluable source of information concerning Hindu social life, psychology and civic organization is what is commonly known today as the Sanskrit literature on sex and love, which is classed under the third kind of Sdstras, viz., the Kdmasdstra, i.e., Science of Sex. 13 Amongst the treatises on Kdmasdstra, Vatsyayana's Kdmasutra is perhaps the most authoritative and valuable for our purposes. This treatise attempts to give detailed information about the psychology of sex, and also such social themes as the life of the citizen (Ndgaraka) and his duties, and the position of woman in the Hindu family and society.

In the pages that follow, I have tried to understand and fathom the principles of living governing Hindu social mind and institutions based upon the above-named and also other important sources

13, That most eminent student and erudite scholar of the psychology of sex, Havelock Elfcs, remarks that "in India sexual love has been sanctified and divinized to a greater extent than in any part of the world. 'It seems never to have Entered into the heads of the Hindu legislators' said Sir William Jones long since, (Works, vol. ii, p. 311), 4 that anything natural could be offensively obscene, a singularity which pervades all their writings, but is no proof of the

depravity of their morals.' The sexual act has often had a religious significance in India, and the minutest details of the sexual life and its variations are discussed in Indian erotic treatise in a spirit of gravity, while nowhere else have the anatomical and physiological sexual characters of women been studied with such minute and adoring reverence. "Love in India, both as regards theory and practice \ remarks Richard Schmidt ( *Bettrdge zwt Jndischen Erotik*, p. 2). possesses an importance which it is impossible for us (Westerners) even to oon-cdveV'

– Studies in the Psychology of Sex, Random House,  
New York 1936, VoL IV, p. 129.

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in the Sanskrit literature. One very surprising fact m this connection is that these various sources so generally agree with each other on fundamental facts and issues of social significance. Differences between them, if and when any, are not only few, but they concern themselves only regarding points of minor details. And, these differences can be usually traced to historical or regional causes.

In any discussion on the social organization and institutions of a people with reference to their ideological and psychological foundations, it would prove valuable to start with the most general of their ideas and views concerning "existence" itself. Thereafter, we may profitably attempt to grasp the fundamental ideas and ideals which govern the life of the individual in a society. This may enable us to understand the fundamental or basic psychology behind its social institutions; for the social institutions are founded more or less on the framework of the proposed or visualized solution to the problem of living. In view of this, we shall first deal generally with the Hindu view of life upon which the Hindu social institutions have been erected (Ch. ii).

Thereafter, we shall consider the Hindu way of regarding the course of an individual's normal span of life with reference to the society from the point of view of the basic ideas of existence. Here we find that man's life is conceived by the Hindu in terms of four specific stages, each of which is viewed as preparatory, ilot merely to the one that follows, but also to all the rest that follow it (Ch. iii) . Thus, the first stage has to be conceived as preparatory not only to the three stages that follow, nor also to the living and understanding and idealization of life as a whole, but also to the meaning, place and function of this life with reference to existence before

and after death. These stages are known as Aftamas, the first being called the Brahmacharyadharma. It is connected with the system of education. It is therefore proper that the institution of education should be taken next into account before considering other institutional tools of life. In view of this, Hindu educational practices and ideals and the psychology underlying them will be our next concern (Ch. iv).

Following the lead of the Ashrama scheme as part of the Hindu

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view of life, we next propose to discuss the problem of marriage (Ch. v) which lays the foundation of the third Ashrama, the Grihasthabhrama (i.e., of the life of a family leader). And the normal consequences of marriage would be the formation of family, the care of Grihasthabhrama, not merely as a biological necessity, but also as a well thought-out social institution, shaped, organised and idealized by human effort, ingenuity and wisdom for ages past; so our discussion on marriage will be followed by the consideration of the institution of the family (Ch. vi).

This will naturally bring us face to face with the problem of the attitude of the Hindu towards the woman, which must be considered in the next chapter (Ch. vii). Along with this, we shall also discuss the views of Hindu social thinkers on the problem and the psychology of sex and love.

Thereafter we deal with the much vexed problem of Varna organisation, which has a special bearing on the Hindu social order (Ch. viii). And finally, we shall conclude our survey with a few observations, in the light of the preceding discussion on the several aspects of Hindu social organization and institutions (Ch. ix).

## CHAPTER II

### THE BASES OF HUMAN RELATIONS

#### The Problem of Existence and its Implications

Yo devo'gnau Yo'psu

Yo Visvam bhuvanamavivesa



Ya oshadhlshu Yo vanaspatishu  
Tasmai devaya namo namah

– tivetasvataropanishad, II, 17

To the Divinity  
That pervades Fire,

That dwells in water,

That penetrates the entire Universe,  
To Him

That lives in medicinal herbs,

That pours life into plants  
To that Shining One  
I offer salutations,

I bow in reverence.

IT has been generally assumed and often asserted that  
\*• the ancient Hindus so much lost themselves in specu-  
lating over the abstract metaphysical problems of the ultimate  
nature of worldly things, that they never exerted any serious  
thinking in connection with the more practical and worldly pro-  
blems, like those of social organization. During recent times, how-  
ever, with the appearance of scholarly European, American and  
Indian studies in the Hindu lore of the bygone times, it is gene-  
rally accepted that the Hindus did carry on a great deal of  
systematized speculation, apart from the purely metaphysical one,  
in the realms of Mathematics, Astronomy, Astrology, Engineering,  
Chemistry, Medicine, Grammar, Politics, Logic, Poetics, and Science

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of Rhetoric.\* Yet, it is usually alleged, that amongst certain other  
intellectual pursuits, Science of Society as such did not engage the  
attention of the Hindu thinker. It is our purpose here to demon-  
strate that, in fact, they had given considerably serious attention  
to the problems connected with social organization, and had evolved  
a system or scheme of social relations for securing the best possible

organization of human life and conduct that they could think of. And this we are doing not primarily with a view to vindicating the Hindu thinker's capacities and achievements in this direction, but in order to discover the roots of the Hindu's social institutions and organization, without the knowledge of which no social reform and reconstruction is really possible, and also in order to see if there are any fruitful suggestions discoverable for such reform and reconstruction. The actual working out of these suggestions into a well rounded social plan to fit in with and suit modern conditions of living is a huge task by itself; and it will not be undertaken here. Nevertheless, if and when any light is possible in this direction, that in itself should be a worthwhile objective in undertaking a study of the Hindu's social heritage, such as is attempted here.

All forms of social organization, including the various social institutions, emerge out of human needs. The human needs define human interests, purposes and aspirations; and, the actual planning or devising of the different forms of social organization takes place in terms of the adjustments of human behaviour, individual and social, with these purposes and aspirations. The Hindu conception of life and its conduct, social as well as individual, is also organised in view of these considerations. And, the formation of this organization is based upon an understanding of the meaning of human existence, its needs and interests and a consequent scheme for conducting human life in accordance with that meaning. The fundamental meaning of life and existence as understood by the Hindu permeates through all the forms of social organization which are intended to regulate and direct the conduct of the individual's life. Therefore, our first task here will be to narrate and try to understand the Hindu's fundamental conceptions regarding human existence as a whole, and its purposes, its aspirations and its mission as

See ch. iv below.

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defined in terms of these fundamental conceptions, in order that we may be able to visualize, against a proper background, the right perspective of the Hindu scheme of social organization as it has come to be formulated and as it is meant to function. We propose to state, in this chapter, this fundamental view of life as conceived by the Hindu, with reference to some of the treatises which have preserved his ancient lore and which are regarded by him as

authoritative guides for the direction and management of human life and human affairs.

According to the Hindu, this life merely by itself alone would have no meaning, it has meaning only as a link, – even if the last, – in a chain of links of births in the past and in the future; it is a stage of transition from past births towards future birth or births, unless Moksha or ‘final liberation’ is obtained within the span of this life. And, essentially, the birth of a human being is but an opportunity for him or her to free himself or herself from the bonds of this chain of births by living a life of Dharma, as laid down by a succession of the “liberated ones” ( Muktas ) in the Sdstras i.e. Scientific Treatises expounding principles of Dharma . The soul of a man is, for the Hindu, immortal; the bodies in which he lives during the stages of transition may change. This fundamental idea persists through the whole of the Hindu lore, – from the Vedas to the Samhitas, thence to the Brahmanas, to the Aranyakas, the Upanishads , the Sutras , the Smritis } the Epics, (viz., the Ramayana and the Mahabharata) , the Puranas , the Itihāsas , the Nitis , the Purāṇas , and even the drama, the poetry, the folk-lore, with minor modifications and additions of details.

To start with, the Vedas give the first form to the idea that the soul of man is immortal, though the body may be burnt away after death. In Rigveda-XV y 35.3, the Ribhus are described to have attained immortality (amritattva) . At another place (RV.V.4.10) there is a prayer to Fire ( Agni ) for granting amritattva. In the tenth mandala of the Rigveda } Agni is invoked (X 16 1-6) to take the deceased to the Fathers and the Gods. And, lastly, there is an interesting Mantra in this mandala (X.58. 1-2.) wherein the soul

1. The social psychological and philosophical implications of this term will become clearer as the reader proceeds through this and the next chapter, to a great extent ; in a sense, however, this whole work seeks to expound the full meaning of dharma only.

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which has gone to the World of Death is recalled; and it is asked to enter into another body once more. In Rigveda, 1, 164.31, also, we have a mention of the notion that the soul of the dead returns frequently to this earth. In the Atharvaveda, this idea of the transmigration of the soul is visualized in such a realistic manner that the deceased is said to meet, after death, the souls of his wives and children (AV.xii.3.17) , and his friends and parents (ibid. vi.

120.3) who had died before him. 2 There is also a reference to personal immortality in the Vedas – a person who performs a sacrifice may be born in the next world with his entire body (sarva-tanuh) . 3

The Brahmanas carry the idea further, A person who practises austerities ( tapas ) retains in heaven all his bodily functions, even those concerned with the sex life (maithuna) . 4 In the Satapatha Erdkmana we find a first clear statement of the theory of Karma, of retributive action; a sage called Bhrigu is shown the tortures which wicked persons have to undergo in hell for their foul deeds on earth. 5 “Whatever food a man eats in this world, by that same afeain is he eaten in the next”. 6 Here is also the first statement that one who gains complete knowledge becomes one with Brahman, the highest universal principle, and is thus liberated. 7

Again, there is the story of Nachiketa who was shown over by Yama all the abodes where the dead reap the fruits of their deeds done in this world. 8

This germ of the idea of the immortality of the soul, coupled with the law of the deed and its retribution (karma^phala) is further developed in the Upanishads. Here, there is a clear statement of the theory of the re-birth of a soul as a result of the fruition of his deeds (karma-phala) . The story of Nachiketa, just referred to above, is also found in the Kathopwnishad; here the idea that the soul of the dead takes up a new body is given a clear expression.

2. See also AV. vi, 120 I , xn, 2, 45 ; xviii, 3, 71 ; xviii, 4-9-10 ; and Vajtsaneyya Samhtid, xviii, 51 ; for this idea of trammigration of the soul.

3. RV. iv. 6, 1, 1 ; xi, 1, 8, 6; xii, 8, 3, 31 ; AV. xi, 3, 32 & 49.

4. Sat. Br . x, 4\* 4, 4.

5. Sat. Bn xi, 6, 1.

6. Sat, Bt, xii, 9, 1, 1.

7. Sat. Br. xi, 5, 6, 9 ; <£, ibid xi, 4, 4, 1 ; Hi, 10, 9, 11.

8. Tmtt Br. iii, 11, Br 1, ff.

‘The mortal being decays like a corn; and like corn it is born again .’ 9 The Brikadaranyakopanishad says that the soul, at death, moves out and is accompanied by the person’s accumulations of all actions ( karmasaya ) during his life-time; and this karmasaya determines the form which the soul has to take in the next birth . 10

s^Here, in this Upanishad, is given an account of the symposium of several philosophers on questions of metaphysical interest. For instance, when questioned as to what happens to the soul after death, Yajnavalkya replies that man’s further life is determined by his own actions (karmas ) , good actions bringing good results, and bad ones, bad results . 11 “As a caterpillar leaves the end of one blade of grass only after it has secured its hold on another, so does this self ( dtmd ) leave the human body only after it has found out another tenement in another kind of existence, and as a goldsmith, taking a piece of gold, turns it into whatever newer and more beautiful shape he pleases, so does this self create for itself a newer and more beautiful existence, be it in the existence of the manes (pitryam ) , of the demi-gods (ganaharvam ) , of the gods or of any beings that it pleases ”. 12 About rebirth according to one’s own Karmas , the Brikadaranyakopanishad says: “As the soul moves out, life (prana) moves out; as the life moves out, all the vital airs (prana) move out after it;” his knowledge and actions and his consciousness of former births and deeds (purvaprajnd) follows him . 13 And again, “As his conduct and behaviour, so does this self (atma) become. He whose deeds have been good becomes good; he whose deeds have been evil becomes evil ( pdpah ). By the holy deeds, he becomes holy; by sinful ones, sinful. It is for this reason that they say that a person consists merely of desires (kdma); as his desire is so his will ( kratuh ); as his will so his deed (karma); as his deed, , so his evolution ” 14 The remedy against the cycle of deeds and births lies in becoming

9. “sasyamiva martyah pachyate sasyamivd jayate pumh \*\* Kathop i, I, 5-6.

10. iii, 2, 13; and iv, 4, 2-6; also cf. Chhando , iii, 14, 1.

11. Brih . Up, iii, 2, 13 : punyo vai punyena karmcmd bkavati papak p&pem.

12. Brih. Up. iv, 4, 3-5 (Belvalkar and Ranade'9 Tr., Hist, of Ind. Phil. p. 206).

13. Brih. Up. iv, 4, 2.

14 ifrik. Up. iv, 4, 3-5; Ranade’s Tr., A Constructive Survey of Upmishadic Philosophy, p. 155.

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completely free from desire: "When a mortal man becomes free from all desires ( kdmah ) that are after his heart, mortal as he is, he nevertheless becomes immortal (a-mritah) and achieves the Brahman' 3 , 15 So long as the person is committed to karmas , he must be born again Those of good conduct (ramamya-charani) will be born as Brahmanas, Kshatriyas or Vajsyas, while those of bad conduct (kapuya-charandh) will be born as dogs, swines or chandalas. 16 The Kaushitaki Upanishad goes further, and states that a soul, according to his actions and knowledge (yatha-karma yathd-vidyam) , will take on the body of a worm, a moth, a fish, a bird, a leopard, a lion, a serpent, or man, or of any creature for that matter. 17 And the Kathopanishad goes still further and declares that a soul may even take the form of inanimate things like plants or trees according to his deed and knowledge (yathd-kamna yatha-srutam 18 ) .

Thus the Vedas and the Aranyakas start with the idea of the immortality of the soul (dtman) , though the body taken up by him is mortal and perishable. They also take the view that the soul of a person suffers in the next birth or enjoys, according as his doings in this world are bad or good. The TJpanishads, as we saw, go even further and say that after the death of one body, the soul takes another body according to his deeds; he may even have to take to comparatively inanimate existence of trees and plants, if his deeds merit these! Freedom from this tangle of birth and death, however, can be attained by a soul with the help of the performance of proper worship and sacrifices. Such worshipper attains the region of the deity whom he has worshipped, according to one Upanishad; 19 while according to another, he achieves a complete likeness ( paramam sdmyam) with God (//am), 20 he merges into the personality of the Divine and becomes one with it, 21 just as a river flows into the sea, loses its name and form, and be-

15. Briti. Up. iv. 9-7, ibid, p. 136.

16. ChJiand. Up. v, 10, 7 : (svayonim va sukaraycmhn va chdndalyomrn va).

17. Kccushi. Up. 1, 2; cf. also Chhdnd. Up. vi. 9, 3.  
ia Kath> Up. ii. 5, 7.

19. (ia y a evam etad rdjanam devatasu protam veda etdsam eva devatanam salokatdm s&rshtitam say uj yam gachchkati) – Chhdnd. Up. 11, 20, 2.

20. Mund. Up. iii, 1, 3.

21 Md. iii. 2, 7-8.

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comes one with the sea. 22 To attain this end of entering the Universal Principle ( Sarvam ) is possible for those who have renounced all passion (vita-rdgah ) , and who have attained peace of mind (praJdntd) and knowledge (jnana-triptah 23 ).

Later literature, starting with these ideas, developed them into a whole philosophy of the Karma theory. Let us now see how the development of the Karma theory takes place, and what it implies for the Hindu.

Among the many Sanskrit works of sociological value, 24 the Mahdhhdrata grapples with the problem of karma along similar lines. In the Vanaparva section there is a long description of the blessings and enjoyments obtainable in Paradise ( svarga ) : "This earth is meant for work (karma-bhrnni) , while the next world is meant for enjoying its rewards (phala-bhumi)" . As soon as the rewards in proportion to deeds (karma) are enjoyed, the individual falls from heaven. Moreover, beyond the next world of enjoyment, there is the eternal abode (sanatanam padam) known as para - bramha from whence there is no return to this world; but that could be attained only by the unselfish (nir-mamdh) , the humble (nir-rthankdrah) , those who have restrained their senses (sa?nya-tendriyah) and attained complete knowledge. 25 "A creature is bound by deeds (karma); he is liberated by knowledge (vidya); by knowledge he becomes eternal, imperceptible and undecaying. Some men of little understanding eulogise karma , so they embrace with delight the entanglements of corporeal existence; but those who have achieved a perfect comprehension of dharma ( dharma - natpuna-darsinah) do not commend karma , as a person drinking from a river thinks little of a well." 26 The soul (atman) "is born again with its accumulated load of karma" 21 And, it is in consequence of a life of karma that one obtains pleasure and pain (sukha-dukkhe) , prosperity and adversity (bhavd 'bhavau) ; by knowledge he reaches that condition in which there is no suffering, no death,

22. Prab t. Up. yi, 5.

23. Miatf. Up. iii, 2, 5.

24 Set ch. L

25. MM. Vanaparva. 260, 36 (KrishnacharyaTs Ed.)

26. MM. xii\* 8810 ff. (—Muir : On. Sam . Texts).

27. MaFUL Vmeu 206, 31\*

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po birth and \* no rebirth . 28 “The acts done in the former births never leave any creature. In determining the various effects of karma, the Creator did see them. Man, being under the influence of karma, must always consider how he can atone for his karma and how he can extricate himself from an evil doom .” 29

The law of karma, moreover, explains why sometimes persons who should evidently deserve happiness and success in life as judged by their deeds in this life nevertheless meet with failures and unhappiness, while sometimes the undeserving seem to succeed. The most intelligent and diligent (daksas cha mati-mantaj cha ) man may get failures in spite of great exertions during this life, but that is as a result of his past karmas, while the wicked during this life may seem to enjoy a happy life in this world . 30 The sage Brihaspati explains to Yudhishtira that after death, a man’s virtuous and vicious karmas follow him and determine his fate in the next birth; one should, therefore, try to acquire dharma which alone is one’s true friend in the next world, and which determines his happiness and sorrow in the next birth . 31 Nay, it determines even the particular kind of existence which he has to take; for the wicked may be born again as dogs, asses, worms and their like . 22 Decrepitude and death are the devourers of all creatures, – the strong as well as the weak, the tall as well as the short, except those who can escape re-birth. The soul only is eternal . 33 Every person therefore should try to attain the liberation of his soul ( moksa ); for this world is full of difficulties and shortcomings . 84 “Whatever (kinchit hi) one does, he is sure to reap the fruit of his own actions. The consequences of karma can never be erased ( ndsti kritasya nasah) . . . Men’s actions follow them. It is due to the influence of these karmas that they are born again and again . 85 Man’s karmas, again, may be either good or evil ( hibham or a-hibham) , and, he is sure to reap as he sows. The people who are ignorant of this law of



2a MM l xii, 8810 ff. Muir, op. dt  
20. MM L Vena, 207, 19420 (Dutt's Tr.)

30. MM. Vana. 208, 9-12 (Dutt's Tr.).

31. MM. Am . Ill, 11-13

32. ibid. 43-130.

33 Mate. Santi. 320, 12-13.

34. Makd. Santi. 174, 5.

35. MM. Vana. 206, 27-23

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karma , severely abuse the higher powers when they are unlucky; for they do not know that their ill luck is the result of their own evil karmas , 36 None can be the dispenser of his own destiny according to his sweet will; the karmas done in the former life are seen to produce fruits in this life ( iha siddhih pradrisyate) , 37 Liberation from this cycle of births and deaths and its accompanying happiness and sorrow can be achieved when there is no more karma . And, to attain this end, all desire {vasana) must come to an end . 38 Moreover, what is expected to give happiness may give you grief; therefore one should try not to be swayed either by the joys or sorrows of this life . 39 "If objects of desire are renounced, they become sources of happiness; the man who follows objects of desire is ruined in that pursuit /' 40 "Neither the happiness which is derived from a gratification of the senses, nor that great happiness which one may enjoy in heaven, comes up equal to even a sixteenth part 1 e., a small fraction of the happiness which originates from the extermination of all desires ." 41 The fulfilment of one desire leads to another desire; and so, an unending series of desires and their consequent karmas is created. "Contentment does not come from an acquisition of the objects of desire. The thirst for acquisition is only further increased by each fresh acquisition, like fire with new fuel thrown into it." 1J The most effective way to end the life of karmas is, therefore, to end all desire (vasana) . Desire has its origin in the actual experience of the pleasures of the senses, touch, sight or hearing . 43 One who has never actually experienced the enjoyment given by an object, never feels the desire for that object . 44 "Therefore, to acquire happiness, a man should vow not to taste, not to touch and not to see ". 45

Here, therefore, we have in an extreme form the idea of attaining liberation ( moksa ) , from the otherwise unending cycle of birth or death, by cultivating a sense of complete detachment from worldly objects. But, the MahAbhadrata also suggests another way of moksa ; and that is by following the way of one's own appointed duties (sva^dharma) . Says Bhishma, that universally respected

36 . Maha. Vana, 208 , 5 - 7 .

38 . Mah3 . Santi. 174 , 45 , ft.

40 . Maha . Bantu 174 , 47 .

42 . Maha. Santi. 180 , 26 .

44 . ibid.

37 . Maha. Vana. 208 , 22 .

39 . ibid.

41 . Maha. Santi. 174 , 48 .

43 . ibid . 180 , 30 .

45 . Maha. Santi. 180 , 33

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wise man, brave soldier, and seer of the Mahdbharata : 'The dharma ordained with regard to every mode of life (meaning the different dharma, about which we shall speak in the next chapter) are capable, if well performed, of leading one to heaven and to the highest fruition of Truth (satya-phalam) . Dharma has numerous ways of expression (sarva-dvara) and none of the practices ( kriya ) enjoined by them fails (viphal) to produce the desired effect".^

The dialogue between the "Dutiful Hunter" ( Dharma-vyadha ) and the Brahmana, is quite instructive in this respect . 47 The Brahmana, a man of the highest caste, had gone to this Dharma-vyadha, who was a hunter by profession, a .man of lowest caste, to learn the ways of Dharma because despite his low birth, the latter was scrupulously observing his duties, and so deserved respect even from a Brahmana. The hunter explains how it is impossible for any person to live without doing any karma : Every one of us is doing something or the other every moment of his life. Even the commandment of Ahimsa – "not to kill any creature" – is

difficult to be obeyed fully. "Man kills innumerable (tiny and imperceptible) animals that live on the ground (for instance) by trampling over them by their feet. Even wise and learned men kill many animals in various ways, when sleeping or resting. The earth and the sky are full of animal organisms which are unconsciously killed by man due to ignorance. "Do not kill" – this commandment was ordained in the days of yore by men who did not know the real facts of existence. . . Any number of things can be said as regards the dharma and adharma of our actions (karma). But (one thing is certain, viz., that) he who adheres to his Dharma (sva-dharma-nirato) acquires great fame ". 48 Therefore, doing one's own duty (niyata-karma) properly, in accordance with one's Dharma , even if it happens to be that of killing, is also an effective way, according to the Mahabharata, of attaining salvation (moksha).

The soul of a man, says the Dutiful Hunter further to the Brahmana, is born again and again with its accumulated load of karma – the virtuous ones (subha-krit) in virtuous existences (hibhacyoni) and the sinful ones (papa-krit) in sinful existence (papa-yoni) . 49 Destiny (meaning the effect of his past karmas here)

46. Mate, Smtu 353, 2.

46 Mate. Vana. 207, 30-39.

47. In Vanaparva, Adhy . 207.

49. ibid Vana. 208, 31.

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is all powerful (t Hdhish-tu balavdn ) , and it is difficult (dus-taram) to overcome the consequences of our past actions (purd kritam). His own birth in 'the profession of a hunter, says the Bharmavyadha, was the fault (dosha) of his karma due to the sins committed in a former life. 50 But he would not therefore abandon the karmas which were proper to his profession. To abandon one's own duties (sva-dharmam) here in this world, is considered to be sinful; to stick to one's own karmas ( sva-karma-niratah ) is certainly keeping with the dharma . 51 And, karma carried out in this manner, i.e., in accordance with one's dharma does not stick to or pollute the individual, even though the karma happens to be that of killing an animal as the case was with the Dharma-vyadha. For, as the now enlightened Brahmana said to him at the end of the conversation:

“These wicked deeds being the duties of your profession, the stain of evil karma ( karma-doshah ) will not attach to you.” 52 Men of little understanding ( alpa-buddhay ah ) are overpowered with grief at heart on the occurrence of something which may not be agreeable to them, or at the non-occurrence of something which may be much desired by them. 53 However, nothing could be achieved by merely grieving over such things; on the contrary, it makes one all the more miserable. 54 Those wise men ( marushinah ) whose knowledge has made them happy and contented ( jndna-triptdh ) and who are indifferent both to happiness and to misery are only really happy; the foolish ( mudhah ) are always discontented, the wise ( panditah ) always feel contentment ( santosham ) . 55 There is no end to discontent; contentment ( tushtih ) , on the other hand, is the highest happiness ( paramam sukham ) . 56 The man who becomes overpowered with dejection ( vish4dah ) and whose energies abandon him when an occasion for displaying vigour presents itself, has no m a n l i n e s s in him ( purusharthah ) . 57 The effect ( phalam ) of our actions performed by us must necessarily ( avafyam ) manifest itself; however, no good is accomplished by giving oneself up to self-disparagement ( nirvedam ) . 58 Instead of grumbling ( a~sochan ) one should try to find out the means ( updyam ) by which one can be

50 . ibid . Vena 207 , 2 .

52 . ibid, 215 , 11 - 12 .

54 . ibid . 215 , 21 .

56 . ibid. 215 , 23 .

58 . ibid. 215 , 26 .

51 . ibid . Vtma. 207 , 18 .

53 . ibid . 215 , 18 .

55 . ibid . 215 , 21 - 22 .

57 . ibid . 215 ^ 25 .

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freed from all misery ( duhkha ) . 59 The means to do this, as the DJiarma-vyadha himself has pointed out above, is to follow sva - dharma during life.

Now\* even though, in general, the Hindu regards Dharma as the body of principles derived from Sruti, Smriti and Parana (/rati-smriti-puranokta ), it has been always recognised by him also that the nature of dharma is extremely complex; and though greatest thinkers have given their best attention to the understanding and elucidation of its principles and its manifestations, it has been also recognised that they have not been completely successful in giving a final and full account of dharma. It is admittedly a subtle ( sukhna ) principle, and we mortals are not likely to understand all its ramifications (gatim ). 60 Even the Srutis differ from each other in their exposition of dharma; nor could we accept the word of anyone of the wise Sages as the sole authority (yramdna ) ; indeed, the basic principles of dharma are unfathomably deep and so, for all practical purposes, the average man should gererally follow what the great (maha-jana) are doing . 61 One who, by his action, attitude and speech, shows that he has always everybody else's wellbeing at his heart and is also constantly engaged in the welfare of all others, can be said to have understood dharma 62

Before proceeding to expound dharma, Manu characterizes it as "that which is followed by the well-versed ( vidvan ) and accepted whole-heartedly by the good men who are ever immune to feelings of hatred and disaffection towards others ". 63 One who desires perfect or pure dharma to be realized must first fully understand not only

60. suksmo dharmo maharaja ndsya vidmo gatim vayam – Mah. Adi. 195, 29. bahunha drtsyate dharma suksma eva dvijcttama.–ibid. Vana. 206-42.

61. tarko'partishthah Srutayv vibhinnd naiko mumr yasya matam pramwam. dharmasya tattvam nihitam guhdydm mahdjana yena gatah see panthdh .

– Mahdbhdrata.

cf. brihad dvarasya dharmasya sukhna duramgd gatih  
t as mad avachyo hyekena bahunnenapi samsaye – Baudh.

52 , sarveshdm yah suhrin nit yam sen v€ sham cha hitt ratah

karmarid manasa vdcha sa dharmam veda Jdjale . – M aha- Sant i. 261-9.

63. vidvadbhih sevitah sadbhih nit yam advesharagibhih  
hridayenabhyanu jndto yo dharmas tarn nibodhata .

–Mam. u. 1.

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the fdstras which have many aspects ( vividha ) but must also comprehend the realities of the situation coupled with inferential reason-

ing . 64 He alone, and no other man, can be said to have understood Dharma, who explores or interprets the utterances of the sages ( ashram ) and the directives of dharma (in the sdstras) by modes of reasoning ( tarka ) which is not contrary to the Vedic lore (Veda-Sdstra ). 65 Says Brihaspati, in regard to dharma : No decision should be taken by mere resort to a (letter of the) sdstras; for, deliberations ( vichdra ) devoid of rational considerations ( yukti-hina ) will lead to results detrimental to dharma.<sup>™</sup> And the Mahabhdrata exhorts that in determining dharma and adharma the learned man should rely upon intelligent understanding ( buddhi ) of the situation . 67

Every dharma-knowing person (dharma-jna) , however, should steer clear of the confusion between one's dharma and other manifestations of dharma , like vi-dharma, para-dharma, dharma-dbhdsa 7 upa-dharma and chhala-dharma , because these ought to be considered as bad as a-dharma itself, so far as his goals and ideals are concerned. Thus, vi-dharma is anything that is contradictory to one's own dharma; para-dharma is dharma which is laid down for others (unlike him) , not meant for oneself; upa-dharma consists of doctrines opposed to established morals (pdkhanda) or of hypocrisy ( dambha ) ; while chhala is the type or form which is dharma in name only, not in truth . 68 What a man does to satisfy his own sweet will is dharmdbhdsa in so far as it may be different from the dharma of his own dsrama (i.e. the order or stage of life in which he is living) . Indeed, how is it possible at all that one may fail to obtain

64. pmtyak sam chdnumdnam cha sdstram cha viiHdhgamem  
trayarri suviditam kdryam dharmatddfoim abhipsitd.

– Mem. XII. 105.

65. dr sham dhar mapadesctm cha v edasdstrdvirodhind  
yas terkenanusamdhatte sa dhar mam vede netarah.

–Menu. XII. 106

66. kevdam sdstram dhitya na kartavyo vxmrtyayah  
yukti hine vie hare tu dhmmahamh prajdyate – Brih .

67. tasmdt kaunteya vidushd dharmddJmrma-vinischaye  
buddhim as they a l&ke'swin vartitavyam kritetmma

– \Mahd-Sdrii. 141, 102.

68-69. vidhmeh paradharmas cha dbhdsa upama chhelah  
adharma-sdkhd penchemd dharmajruPdharma vat tyajet  
dharmabddko vidharmah sydt paradharma' nyachoditah

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peace as long as one is following the dhamnas which are laid down so as to be in accordance with one's own natural tendencies and aptitudes ( svabhdva-vihitah ) ? 69

And here we embark upon another important issue, – an issue which is constantly facing every human being so often in his life, and yet, on which, so far no completely satisfactory answer has been offered by any social thinker,– viz., how far life is governed by fate or destiny ( daiva ) and/or how far by one's own effort or exertion ( purusha-kdra ) ? The Hindu thinker's attempts to deal with this problem are highly interesting.

Yudhisthira desired to know which of the two – daiva or purushakdra – was more powerful (sreshthataram) ; and for an adequate answer to this problem, he turned to the most learned (mahd-prdjna) Bhlshmapitamaha who was well-versed in all the fdstras (sarva-sdstra-visdradah) . 70 In answer to the query, Bhlshma narrates the discourse between the God Brahman himself and Vasishtha, a Sage, on the same topic . 71 One's own efforts or strivings or exertions (purusha-kdra) , says Brahman, are like the seed (bijam) while destiny or fate (daiva) is comparable to the soil ( ksetram ); and the harvest ( sasyam ) thrives from the union of the two ( samyogdt samriddhyate 12 ) . Just as without the seed, the soil though tilled does not yield any fruit, similarly without human effort, destiny does not get fulfilled (na siddhyati™) . Nothing can ever be gained by depending upon fate only by a person who lacks the will to make efforts (a-kritdtrriand) ; on the other hand everything ( sarvam ) can be (ultimately) attainable by effort or exertion (karmand) J 4 Man's efforts, when utilised ( kritah purusha-kdras tu) only follow his destiny ( daivam evanuvartate); but destiny alone by itself cannot give anything to any one who lacks efforts (na daivam-akrite kinchit kasyachit ddtum-arhati 75 ) . Just as even p

■upadharas tu paklufyfo dambho vd iabdabhich-chhalah  
yastvichchhayd kritah pumbhir dbhdsa hydsramdt prithak  
svabkdva-vihito dharmch kasya neshfah prasantaye ?

– Bhdg. Pura. vii. 15.

70. Mahd. Anu. 6, 1-2.

71. ibid. Amu. adkydya. (The whole adhydya).

72. ibid. 6, 8.

73. ibid, 6, 7.

74. *ibid.* 6, 7.

75. *ibid.* 6, 22.

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small fire becomes highly powerful ( mahdn ) when fanned by wind, so does fate become highly potent when aided by individual exertion (karrna'Sam#yuktam) . 76 On the other hand, just as the light in a lamp diminishes by diminishing the supply of oil, so by the abatement of exertion or effort (karma-kJayad) the influence of destiny also diminishes . 77 There is no inherent power in destiny itself (nfisti daive prabhiUvam) . Just as a pupil follows his preceptor ( guru) f so does one's karma guided by destiny follow his personal exertions (purusha-kdrah) ; where one's own exertion is displayed, there only does destiny show its hand , 78 "By the influence (abhyutthdna) of daiva and by using personal exertion do men attain bliss ( svarga ); the combined help of destiny and exertion becomes fruitful ". 79 This is the conclusion at which Brahman himself arrived after carefully weighing the claims of destiny and personal exertion.

\_/The same advice is repeated in Sdntiparva; Destiny and exertion depend upon each other ( anyonya^samsraya ) ; hence the high minded ( udara ) engage themselves in good acts, while the impotent ( kUba ) rely upon destiny. All activities which would help to promote his good should be taken up by man, whether these are harsh or mild. On the other hand, the man who is disinclined to act suffers constantly from calamities and lack of resources. Hence, unmindful of anything else, one should always display one's energy; indeed, men should attend to their good above everything else. In this regard, knowledge, bravery, alertness, strength and courage are man's five natural friends or helpmates; the wise man uses them in this world. Other things like house, precious metal, land, wife, friends are considered as man's secondary sources of good; he may secure them everywhere . 80

76. *ibid.* 6, 43.

77. *ibid* : 6, 44.

78. *ibid.* 6 t 47.

79. *ibid.* 6, 4a



80 . daivam puruskakaraicha stkitavany&nya samirayat,  
 udardnam tu satkarma, daivam kTtba upasate.  
 karmam chdtmahitam karyam tikshnam vd yadi vd mridu  
 grasyate akarmastlas tu scddnarthah akittchanah .  
 tasimt sarvam vyapohydrtham karya eva pardkramah  
 sarmsvam apt samtyajya karyam dtmahitam naraih.

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The problem of karma has received attention at the hands of the ^Dharma-Sdstras, or what are generally known as the Smritis, also. Manu-Smriti, for instances, devotes the greater part of one whole chapter (Ch. xii) to it. The discussion may be briefly summarised as follows: AH action (karma ) , in the opinion of Manu, springs from mind, speech and body ( mano-vgd-deha-sam - bhavam ) and produces either good or bad results. These karmas are the cause of the various conditions of life (gatayah) of man . 31 Thus, as a result of the mental sins, a person becomes a low-caste (antya-jdti) in the next birth; as a result of sins committed by speech, he may be bom again as a bird or as a beast; while as a result of the sins of body, he becomes, in the next birth, an inanimate object (sthdivarata) , 82 A person who has committed wicked deeds is tortured by the God of Death (Yama) after death; and, after atoning for those sins, such a person is born again . 83 Every one, therefore, should understand these transitions (gati) of the soul (jiva) according in his righteous or unrighteous conduct (dharmato' dharmatascha ) , and should always fix his mind on dharma (dharme dadhyat sada manah) "But with whatever disposition of mind or motive (bhdva) he performs any action, he reaps its result in a (future) body endowed with the same quality ." 85 Karma is therefore essentially connected with re-birth. No act whatsoever can go without its effect (phala) to enjoy or suffer which, as the case may be, one must be bom again.

Manu, however, suggests a remedy to go out of the cycle of births and deaths (samsdra ) . That remedy lies in the attainment of the knowledge of the self (atma-jndna ) . This knowledge is the most blessed of all the blessed actions here in this world (htbhdnam karmnam pa ram smritam .) w Through this knowledge, immorta-

vidya sauryam cha ddkiyam cha bdam dhairyant cha panchamam .  
 mitrani sahajanyahur vartayantlha fair bud hah  
 nivesanam cha kupyam cha ksetram bhdryo suhrijanah

etdnyupah i t any ah u h sot vat ra labhate pumdru

81. Man. xii, 3.

82. Man. xii, 9; cf. Yd), iii, 131; and 134-6

83. Man. xii, 17-22.

84. Mm. xii, 23.

85. Man. xii, 81.

86. Man. xii, 85,

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lity (amritam) and freedom from birth are gained . 87 All karmas performed in accordance with the precepts of the Vedas ( vaidikam karma) are sure to bring happiness both in this world and in the next ; 88 for, they include ( antarbhavati ) all ( sarvcim ) meritorious acts (dharma-karmAni) . 89 Now this vaidika-karma leads to two ways: 90 one is that of pravritti, that is of increase of happiness and of a continuation of mundane existence; and the other of nivritti, that is, of the cessation of mundane existence and thus of the achievement of supreme bliss (naihśreyasikam) . ei Mere meritorious action will not lead to the attainment of the supreme bliss (which is molda ) ; it will lead, at best, to happmess during the next birth. The state of supreme bliss from whence there is no return to this mundane existence can be obtained only by attaining knowledge of the self ( atma-jnana ) . "He who sacrifices to the self ( atma-yap ) equally recognising ( samam pasyan) the self in all created beings, and all created beings in the self, becomes independent like a self-controlled and self-luminous being (svdrdhyam) , 92 The real fulfilment of the mission of one's life ( janma-sdphalya ) is possible for him who exerts to the best of his abilities towards acquiring the knowledge of the self (dtma-jnana) towards extinguishing his passions ( sama ) , and towards pursuing the study of the Vedas . 93 Steady application or discipline or austerities (tapas) and

87. Man. xii, 85.

88. Man . xii, 85.

89. Man. xii, 87.

90. On this whole question of the pravritti-marga and nivritti-mfirga see the excellent exposition of Prof. E. I. Urwick in his book, *The Message of Plato : A Re-Interpretation of the Republic* , Methuen, London, 1920.

Prof. Urwick was Director of the (then) School of Sociology and Professor of Social Philosophy in London University, Tooke Professor of Economic Science and President of Morley Memorial College, and later became Director of Social Sciences in Toronto University, Canada.

Owing to the title of the book, " The Message of Plato " had escaped the attention of the present author when he published the first edit'on of this book ; but Professor Urwick himself, on noticing this author's book, was kind enough to write and draw his attention to the book. The book cannot be too highly commended. See A NOTE ON PROFESSOR E. J. URWICK at the end of this chapter.

91-2. Man. xii, 88, 91. Csvcrajya', from 'raf 'to rule' as well as 'to shine', following Medhatithi).

93. Man. xii, 92-93, cf. Mund. Up. iii, 2, 5, quoted before.

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knowledge ( vidya ) are the best means of obtaining supreme end of life ( nihsreyasakaram param); disciplined activity destroys one's blemish ( kilbisha ); and, knowledge 94 (vidya) secures cessation from births and deaths ( amritam ) . 95 To attain to this highest state (param padam) and so to be one with the Brahman , one must be able to recognise the self through the self (atmdnamdtmana pasyati) in all created beings, and be just or equable in his behaviour towards all ( sarvasamatd ) This is the real dharma of man as prescribed by Manu in the Mdnava-dhamia-sastra in his discussion on what is Dharma and what is Adharma (dharma dharmau) .

Therefore, without causing pain to anybody, one should gradually accumulate (samchinuydt) dharma for the sake of acquiring an aid in the next world . 97 For in the next world, neither father, nor mother, nor sons nor wife, nor relations stay to help him (through) (sahdydrtham) ; dharma alone stays (dharmastishthati kevalaJi). 05 Single is each being born; single it dies; single it enjoys the rewards of its good deeds (sukrutam) ; single it suffers for its bad deeds (dushkritam) Leaving the dead body on the ground like a log of wood or a clod of earth, the relations depart with averted faces; but dharma alone follows him . 100 During life, therefore,

94. The word "Knowledge"\* (jnana, vidya) used by the Hindu in connection with the attainment of Mcksa, requires some explanation \* 4 Knowledge in such connection means knowledge of the Ultimate Reality – dtmajruma, or brakmajnwia , – than which there could be no higher knowledge. In a sense, therefore, ones knowledge of any particular science is no " knowledge " in the fu# meaning of the term for the Hindu. Rut in another sense, this also couki be called knowledge by him, provided it is understood in its widest implication, viz., that the real and most thorough knowledge of anything whatever, be it of small things or great, must lead to the knowledge of the Ultimate Reality ; and therefore, a full and complete knowledge ot any particular science, will include the knowledge of everything else ! Strictly speaking, therefore, for the Hindu, ' knowledge ' means knowledge of the Supreme, i.e., " knowledge " in its comprehensive sense. It is the inter-relation of the finite with infinite, and you cannot know fully about the finite until you have understood its relation with the infinite also. The knowledge merely of the behaviour of finite things, i.e., of mathematics, or chemistry, as such, is Still largely ignorance ( avidyd ) in this sense ; it ia information about only one or more isolated aspects of the Ultimate Reality.

95. Man. xii, 104 : ' tapes = svasdharma-vTittitvam \* – Kulluka.

96. Man. xii, 125. 97. Man. iv. 238

98. ibid. iv. 239. 99. ibid. iv. 240.

100. ibid. iv. 241.

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a person should always ( nityam ) gradually ( sanaih ) accumulate dharma for his aid (sahdya) ; for with dharma as his companion he will traverse the gloom (tamos) which is otherwise difficult to traverse (dustaram) 101 For Dharma speedily conducts the man. who is devoted to it (dharma-pradhanam) , by eradicating his sins ( kilbisha ) by a life of disciplined activities (tapas) , to the next world (paralokam) , radiant ( bhdsvanta ) and possessing an ethereal body (kha~sarinnah) 102 Dharma, when violated, destroys; dharma when preserved protects ; 103 therefore, dharma must never be violated, lest violated dharma may destroy us . 104 For, Divine Dharma is like a c vrisha 3 (i.e. bull) , and he who would have 'alam 3 ('no more') with it, i.e. would not follow it, would be considered by the

gods to be a vnshala (« vnsha + alam) i.e. a low-born person; therefore one should never violate dharma . 105 The only friend (suhrid) who follows man even after death is dharma ; for everything else is lost at the same time that the body perishes . 106 A person should, therefore, never turn his mind to adharma even though he has to suffer due to following his dharma ; for he would find that there is quick destruction awaiting those who do not follow dharma and are (therefore) sinful . 107 Adharma practised in this world (loka) may not produce its fruit (phala) immediately like seeds sown in the earth, but it gradually accumulates and destroys the man who practised it to the root (kartur mulani krintati) . 108 Once committed, adharma never fails to produce its effects upon him who did it; if the calamity does not fall upon himself, it falls upon his sons; and if not upon the sons then upon his grandsons . 109 For the time being he may prosper through adharma; and, he may also achieve success; and thereafter, he may even overpower his enemies; however, ultimately he is destroyed to the root (samu-

101. *ibid.* iv. 242.

102. *ibid.* iv. 243.

103. dharma eva hato hanti dkarmo rakshati rakshitah – *ibid.*, vii. 15.

104. *ibid.*, vii, 15.

105. vrisho hi bhagavdn dharmastasya yah kurute hyalam

vrishalam turn vidurdevdstasrndddharmam mi lopayet – *Mam.* viii, 16.

man varshati iti vrishak” – i e. ‘vrkha means one who pours forth pleasures, says Kullukabhafe– commenting on the word.

106. *ibid.* viii. 17. 107. *ibid.* iv. 171.

108. *ibid.* iv. 172. 109. *ibid.* iv. 173.

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lah). 110 He should therefore find satisfaction ( dramet ) in the true dharma and conduct such as would become an Arya. 111 Let him therefore abandon even kama and artha if and when and where these are lacking dharma (dharmavarjitau) . And even dharma may be abandoned if and when it would cause pam m the future

or is harsh or cruel to human beings (lokanikrishtam) . 112 This means that the ultimate test of true dharma is not a self-regarding one but other-regarding one.

Yajnavalkya agrees with this expression of the doctrine of dharma and karma as expounded by Manu In the opening verse of his gloss on Ydjavalkyasmnti , the commentator Balambhatta says that Dharma and Adharma are the seeds of the accumulation of karma ( karmasaya ); and that from this karmasaya grow the three-fold results viz. (1) Jdti , that is birth in the high or the low position, (2) Ayu, that is, the length of life, and (3) Bhoga, that is, the enjoyment or suffering, for every human being. Dharma may be said to consist in the right karma Yajnavalkya says that he has been only expounding the dharma of the different varnas, of the different orders of life (dsramas) , and other relevant topics (itara) in the Smriti. 113 The Mitaksard of Vijnanesvara further comments on this statement by saying that Yajnavalkya is considering six topics in connection with the question of dharma: (i) the varna-dharma , referring to the duties of man in relation to the four classes of men, (ii) the asrama-dharma concerning the duties connected with the four stages of human life, (in) the varnasrama - dharma, concerning the duties of man towards both the varnas and the asramas in their interrelationship with each other, 114 (iv) guna-dharma, regarding the duties of persons with reference to the characteristic tendencies ( gunas ) which are innate in them; 115 (v) nimitta-dharma, concerning the duties of man in connection with

110 *ibid.* iv. 174.

111. *ibid.* iv. 175.

112. *ibid.* iv. 176.

113. cf. also Man. iv. 171-81, ante.

114. For example, the rule that a person belonging to the Brahraana vama and desiring to enter the dirama of studenthood (brahmacharya) shoujd carry a stick of palasa tree, and so forth.

115. For example, the rule that the highest duty of a king,- i.e , a Kshatriya, fe to protect his subjects.

particular or special occasions (nimitta) , 116 1 e. special duties, or duties according to exigencies, and (vi) sadharana-dharma, embracing duties common to all men and women as human beings , 117 i.e. general duties These various dharmas describe and prescribe the right karmas for man Of all karmas , including sacrifices (ijy&) , rituals ( dchdra ), discipline (dama), harmlessness (ahnnsd), liberality (dana) , and the study of the Vedas (svddhydy) , the highest dharma (pararno dharmah) of man is self-realization ( dtma-dar - ianam). 11a Here, again, we come to the oft-stressed method of attaining dtma-^ndna for the salvation of the soul. And, it is the duty of the King to see that the various social institutions like the family (kuUm) , the caste (jdtih) , the trade-guilds (srenih) , the sects ( ganam ) and associations or unions like those of the artisans etc. (jdna-paddn) , who have deviated from their proper dharma (svadhanruichchalitdn-jdtdn) shall be properly disciplined ( viruya ) and set m the right path . 110

Here we may also refer to the similar observations made by the Sukra-Niti. This Niti work, too, speaks of one's existence as being conditioned by his karmas m the previous births. "Everything m this life is founded on daiva (destiny, fate) and karma , the latter being divided into that done in previous birth or births, and that done in this one . 120 Sukra-Niti thus admits daiva also as a factor conditioning the destiny of a person. But this is not to say that what man is and becomes has been already in toto decided for him by his fate, and that therefore he should not strive or make any effort and should lead an inactive life For, it is the weak who lead an inactive life; while those who have energy and strength can change their future destiny by work done m this birth (ihdr-jita). Thus, in the ultimate analysis, one's own actions ( karmas ) alone are the cause of his good or bad luak (daiva) . 121

Moreover, says the Sukra-Niti , his karmas can determine not

116, For example, rules regarding observing penance for failure to carry cut certain duties.

117 For example, harmlessness, and befriending all living creatures, cf. Medhatithi and Kulluka, commenting on Manu. ri, 25

118. Yap i, 8.

119. Yap 361.

120. sukr. Ni. i, 97-98 (Tr. by B. K. Sarkar)

121. sukr. Ni . i, 73.

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only his destiny (daiva) in the next birth, but also his mental dispositions in the next birth. A man is also inclined to virtues or vices according to the effects of his karmas in his former births. 122 Therefore, according to Sukra-Niti, though Fate (daiva) is a factor in determining the destiny of man, his own karmas themselves have a tremendous influence over his fate. Sukra-Niti is not altogether free from ambiguity in this connection. It may be that it seeks to strike a mean between two extremes; or it may be said to be stating the case of both the sides, leaving the reader to judge and decide between the two. Anyway, we see that, on the one hand it praises the philosophy of action (paurusha) which is born of active efforts (karma) in this life, 123 and denounces those who worship fate (daiva); 134 and, on the other hand, it opines that everything is founded on both fate (daiva) as well as karma. 124 At one place, it seems to give fate (daiva) a more exalted place than karma as the determining factor in human destiny. "The intellectual disposition is generated according to the fruits of work (karma-phala) make their appearance. The means and instrumentalities used also are such as are adopted to the predestined fate (daiva)." 125

This difficult problem has been more clearly answered in Yajñavalkya's Smṛiti. He says: — "The fulfilment of an action (karma-siddhi) rests between destiny and human effort (daiva-purushakāreṇa vyavasthitā). Of these two, destiny is the manifestation (abhivyaktam) of the human effort (pauruṣam) of the past life. Some people hold that the fulfilment of an object is the result of destiny (daiva) only; some, of accident (svabhdva); some, of time (kāla), some, of human effort (puruṣa-kāra); but men of clear understanding (kusala-buddhayaḥ) hold, however, that the fruit (phala) is the result of the combination (samyoga) of these. As, indeed, by one wheel alone there is no motion of the chariot, so without human effort, the destiny does not get fulfilment (na siddhiyati). 127 Yajñavalkya-Smṛiti therefore holds, along with the Mahābhārata, that both karma as well as daiva are together operative in the shaping of human affairs.

We shall next consider the views of the Yoga-Sūtras of Patañjali on the problems of existence, of karma and of mukti, without

122. sukr. Nt. i, 89-90,

124. ibid, i, 96.

125. sukr, Ni i, 91-92.



123. sukr. Nt. i, 105.

125. ibid . i, 97.

127. Yd), i, 349-51.

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concerning ourselves with the purely metaphysical implications of this system of thought. Even though Yoga has come to be regarded as one of the six systems of Hindu Philosophy, we must not forget that the chief interest of the Yoga-Sutras lies, not in building up a system of metaphysics, but in devising an outlook and practices in consequence of the same, by the aid of which one could liberate oneself from the bonds of karma ( karma-bandha ) and thereafter attain liberation (kaivalya) . 125 In this sense, Yoga is more a practical philosophy of life than a purely speculative metaphysical system; and therefore the system has a particular interest and value in connection with our present discussion

The word 'Yoga' is derived from 'yuj', to join\*, in which case it would mean joining or union of finite soul with the infinite or supreme soul ( Uvara ) i.e. God. It implies that there is disunion, or separation (vi-yoga) between God and man, and that Yoga is an effort towards dissolving that separation. Hence the term Yoga has also come to mean the efforts, or the method or system of efforts by the help of which the union of God and man is effected. In fact the Yoga-Sutras use the word Yoga generally in this latter sense, as a method involving strenuous efforts or exertions towards attaining the liberation of the soul ( kaivalya ) . 12 ° The word is also used as a synonym for the samAdhi – which is the last stage, among several, that the Yogi attains – in which case the word would be derived from the root c yu? as meaning 'to go into trance or to meditate '. 130

The word seems to have a peculiar fascination for the Hindu, since it has been used in combination with other words, by doing which the meanings of the latter are invested with a special import in each case – as in the expressions like karma-yoga , jñāna-yoga and bhakti-yoga. In these cases "yoga" means a "system", a "discipline".

To return to our discussion of the views of Yoga-Sutras:  
According to Patanjali,nescience (amāya) is the root cause of human suffering, including birth and death. All the 'afflictions'

128. cf. Radhalkrishnan : "The main interest of Patanjali is not metaphysical theorising but the practical motive of indicating how salvation can be attained by disciplined activity/' "Indian Philosophy," Vol ii, (1927), p. 338.

129. cf. ibid. p. 338.

130. See Vasu's Intro, to "Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali ?' Tr. by Rama Prasad. "Sacred Bks. of the Hindus/' Allahabad, p. 1.

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( klesdh ) of mail arise out of the unreal or distorted cognition (viparyayah) , or avidyd m the larger sense, which identifies Purusha with Praknti , the ego with the body, the Mind with Matter Avidyd is not absence of knowledge, it is rather false knowledge which is positively m antagonism to right knowledge (vidyd-viparitam yndndntaram-avidyd) . 131 It gives rise to five kinds of 'afflictions' ( klesas ) as mentioned below: -

(i) Avidyd , which wrongly identifies the transient with the intransient principle, the ephemeral with the eternal, the effect with the cause, the ego with the Purusha 1 e , the Primary Spirit from which everything has originated. This avidyd is the principle klesa of human beings; and in the larger sense, it underlies all the other klesas.

(li) Asmitd, meaning the mistaken identification of the body, through which the self functions, with the self itself.

(m) Raga, which defines the inclination towards, and seeking after, things that give pleasure.

(iv) Dvela which refers to the hatred of and consequent avoidance of things that cause pain.

(v) Abhinivesa which relates to the love of life and fear of death . 132

The last four are only sub-divisions or modifications ( bheddh ) of a-vidya and as such arise out of it. All the klesas, therefore would be removed 133 as soon as avidyd itself is removed. And, the removal of avidyd could be achieved by right knowledge (prajni) with the aid of Yoga.

Further, avidyd is the cause of all karmas of man on account

of the klesas described above. The klesas are, so to say, the immediate cause of all our karmas – the good ones (punya-karmas) as well as the evil ones (papa-karmas) , 134 And the effects of these karmas are felt both in this life as well as after it is over . 135 They are the cause of birth (jati), life-span (ayu), and life-experiences (bhoga) , 136

131. Da 9 Gupta : “ The Study of Patanjali” p. 99.

132. Pat. Yog. Sut. ii. 3. (Rama Prasad's ed.) .

133. See Vachaspati on Pat. ii, 3, and Vyasa on Pat. ii, 4.

134. See Vyasa on Pat. ii, 12.

135. drishditi – Pat. ii, 12.

136. Pat. ii, 13.

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Patanjali speaks of karmas in terms of 'white' (sukla) and 'black' (krishna) . The karmas of average man are either 'white', or 'black', or 'white-black' (sukla-k'rishna) . The sukla-karmas are due to mental states only ( manasadyattatvadd ) and are not dependent upon external means (bahih sadhanandhinah) ; these are study ( svadhyaya ) and meditation ( dhyana ) ; these acts are free from injury (ahimsa) to others, – the really harmless acts The krishna-karmas are the wicked deeds. And, the sukla-krishna-karmas partake of the character of both; these are brought about by external means, by acting kindly to some and causing pain to some others; indeed, in all cases where kindness is shown to some by the help of external means, injury is sure to be caused to some others . 137 Even in such apparently innocent actions as preparing barley for food to be given to another, it is possible that ants and other tiny or imperceptible living beings may be injured at the time of pounding the barley 138

Now, the three kinds of karmas described above are the karmas of the average man But the karmas of a Yogin belong to none of these three kinds 139 They are certainly not black; nor are they white because the Yogin gives up his claim to the fruit of actions (phala-samnyasad) ; 140 he dedicates it to Isvara . U1 The Yogi is a 'karma-samnyasi' – by which term is meant, not one who has re-

nounced doing anything, but one who has renounced the ownership or the claims to the fruit of his actions (phala-samnyasa) . The Yogi's karmas are merely atonements of past obligations and debts; they do not create future obligations, because they are not karmas in the usual sense of the word; therefore, they are neither 'white' nor 'black'.

This, of course, does not involve any absence of karma , or inertia, as may be thought by some; in fact the actions of a yogi are karmas , performed on the attainment of discriminating knowledge (viveka-khydtih) which now fathoms the distinction between Purusha and Prakriti; besides, the fruits of these karmas are dedi-

137. "yadyavat hakih sddhamsddhyam tatah sarvatrdsti kasyachit Vachaspati on Pat iv, 7.

138. See Pat. iv, 7, and Vyasa and Vachaspati on it.

139. "karntasuklakTiskrum yoginas trividham Hartshorn"— Pat. iv, 7.

140. Vyasa on Pat. iv. 7.

141. Vyasa and Vachaspati on Pat . iv, 7.

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cated to isvara, and they are performed m His name. The Yogi does these karmas with the full knowledge that His (Isvara's) will be done, on earth as in heaven," and indeed, throughout the whole universe The "fire of knowledge" ( jndndgni ) burns down to ashes all avidydy and with the destruction of avidydy, all klesas are removed right to the root , 142 thence also are the good and bad accumulations of karmas (karmas ayah) utterly destroyed. And t-s the klesas and karmas are thus completely destroyed, the wise man (vidvan) becomes liberated and free even while alive (jtvant~muktah) The cause of all existence is rooted in distorted understanding (viparyayah) ; hence, one who is free from the affliction of unreal cognition ( kstna-klesa-viprayayah ) will not be bom (jdtah) again . 143

Thus, m the opinion of Patanjali, knowledge (jndna) is the only means of bringing to an end the otherwise endless cycle of karmas (m the sense of a force that causes re-birth) and birth, each causing the other in succession, one after the other. The karmas do not cease with the attainment of jnana; but they entirely lose

their previous import or implication or potency for the doer. With the attainment of jnana, the Yogi becomes a dharma-megha (cloud of dharma) , as it were, which showers down blessings upon humanity. The word 'cloud' ( megha ) probably signifies that he becomes immune, so to speak, to the 'touch' of the karmas or their effect. That wise man (kusalah) in whom the light of knowledge has dawned ( pratyudita-khyatih ) and whose longings and desires have been destroyed (ksina-trishnah) is not born again . 141 All others have to be born again.

So, for the YogaSutras of Patanjali, the end of human existence lies in the final emancipation ( kaivalya ) of the Purusha from the bondage of Prakriti . 145 But this is not the same as physical death. It consists of the destruction of avidya brought about by the knowledge (jñāna) that Purusha is entirely distinct from Prakriti. It accrues, moreover, out of the death of the fundamental human weakness in each of us, and the realization that all our karmas have reference to the Purusha. That highest state of Samadhi , say the Yoga-

142. samudhātani hata bhavanī ?' – Vyasa on Pat. iv. 30.

143. ibid.

144. Vyasa on Pat. iv, 33.

145. See Pat. iv.

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Sutras , wherein this realization dawns upon the Yogi, is called the dharma-viegha-samadhi lie – wherein the Yogi , becomes a veritable mass of all that is holy and saintly. For whatever he does then is prompted and performed by the Purusha , – the Holy Principle in him – which is now fully liberated from the restraining influence of Prakriti .

The Purushas are striving, through time and space, to attain to that Holiest Principle, God, or isvara, which is a distinguished (viseshah) Purusha 147 and therefore distinct from other Purushas. He is distinguished from the other Purushas by the fact that He is untouched by any of the klesas, karmas, and their effects , 148 to which the other Purushas might be subjected owing to their bondage to Prakriti. For Patanjali, the Purushas , even after they have attained kaivalya (absolute freedom from the bondage to Prakriti ), are to be distinguished from isvara, For isvara never

had, nor will ever have, any relation to these bondages ; 149 in fact, isvara is ever free . 150 On the other hand, in the case of a purusha which is emancipated, the former bondage is known , 151 and even a future bondage is possible . 152

By far the most popular and influential treatise on the problem of human existence in the Sanskrit Literature is perhaps the Bhaga - vad-Gita – “the Song of the Lord.” This treatise has secured the most honoured place in the heart of the masses as well as the classes of India not only in matters of religious behaviour but also on social and moral issues. Therefore, the Gita must be considered by us an authority of very great importance for our purpose here. It answers the problem of karma more clearly than any other treatise has done so far.

Like others dealing with the same problem, the starting point of the Gita too is the theory of karma and rebirth. The present stage of life is a period of transition, with past births and their karmas and the future lives. The soul (atma) itself as

146. Pat. iv, 29.

147. “picntshavtieska Isvarah” – Pat. i, 24.

148. ti klektkarmavipdkdsay<n7ap<rrdm^ishtahJ ,

149. “Uvarasya cha tatsamhmdkc na bhuto na bhavt”

150\* “\$a tu sadaiva muktah sadaiva IsvarahP

151. “ puTvabandhako\$ih prajdyateP

152, "uttara bandhakotih sambhdvyate \* – Vachaspati on Pat. i, 24.

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such never dies nor is it bom again (na jdyate na mnyate) , even when the body dies, the soul is not dead 153 Just as man discards worn out clothes and puts on new ones, so the soul discards old bodies (sarirdni) and takes up new ones. 154 One who is born is sure to die some day; and one who is dead is sure to take birth again 155 – unless, of course, he obtains salvation ( mukti ) ; but then, such a person who has attained salvation does not “die”; he is, as the word “mukti” implies, “freed” from birth and death.

Otherwise, no one can live even for a moment ( ksanam ajpi) without doing some kind of karma , 156 and again, the accumulation of karma is sure to cause another birth.

Now if karma is the cause of the bondage of the individual into a chain of births and deaths ( samsdra ), it may be felt that the best remedy against this samsdra and its concomitant entanglements which will continue ad infinitum would be, according to this karma theory, to cease doing any karmas at all! This is the natural conclusion to which a partial or superficial view of the karma theory would lead. And, in fact, some scholars have been led to find this meaning in the karma theory. They have contended that the theory of karma, in solving the problem of existence, leads to inaction and fatality, if mukti has to be the end of human life. Thus, Macdonell has said: "A result of the combined doctrine of transmigration and karma is, it is true, to reconcile men to their fate as the just retribution for deeds done in a previous life, but on the other hand, it paralyzes action, drives to asceticism, and makes action self-regarding, since it becomes the aim of every man to win salvation for himself individually, by acquiring the right knowledge. There is consequently little scope for the development of other-regarding virtues, as each individual is intent on gaining his own salvation". 157 And Sir A. Berriedale Keith, another noted Sanskrit scholar, calls karma theory "essentially fatalistic". 158 It is our purpose here to show that on a complete view of the implications and meaning of the karma theory such a conclusion would be entirely unwarranted: and though our foregoing discussion

153. Gṛ. ii, 20. 154. Gi. ii, 22.

155. Gi. iu 27. 156. Gi. iii, 5.

157. Macdonell : Lectures on Comparative Religion, 1925, p. 67.

158. Keith : Religion and Philosophy of the Vedas and the Upanishads, vol, ii, p. 596.

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would have partially refuted such criticism of the karma theory, our best authority on this point, for further discussion, would be no other than the Bhagavad-Gītā itself, as could be seen from what follows.

The very origin of this great treatise is worth a careful

notice in this connection. Arjuna is about to resign his duty of fighting like a true soldier on the battlefield, when he sees a vast number of men, among whom were also so many of his kith and kin, who would be killed in the war. Sri Krishna, however, persuades him to take up his weapons and do his duty as a soldier on the battlefield; and the whole of the Gita is primarily a discourse directed to press home to Arjun this point of doing the duties of one's station, whatever may befall one. This means that the central theme around which the Gita is woven is: "Do thy duty, follow thy svadharma, and don't ever be inactive" <sup>1</sup>. The Bhagvad-Gita advocates a life of action and denounces that of inaction; for "action is certainly far better than inaction". <sup>15</sup> \* The great king Janaka and others attained their salvation by following the path of action ( karma-yoga ) ; and, indeed, Janaka did not cease doing his karmas even after attaining mukti . <sup>160</sup> So also, there was nothing in this world for the Great Krishna himself to carry out ( kartavyam ) ; nor was there anything for him to gain that he had not already gained; and yet he followed the path of action ( karmayoga ) because great people do set an example to mankind . <sup>161</sup>

However the Gita ideal of activity is a qualified one. It does not advocate that any kind of action is preferable to inaction. Further, in carrying out the desirable actions, the Gita wants that they should be carried out under a particular discipline and with reference to a specific purpose. Thus, there are two kinds of checks on the path of action in the Gita. The first is the internal one, a kind of psychological discipline, in that karmas are to be carried out without any attachment ( a-saktah ) to them , <sup>162</sup> without any feeling of pleasurable or unpleasurable association ( vdsa na ), without any idea of "mine" and "thine" and of ego-involvement ( mamatva ) . Blessed is the man who keeps his senses under

158. Gi. iii, 8 "karma jyayo kyakarmanah

160. GL iii, 20.

161. Gi. iii, 21-22.

162. Gi. iii, 19.

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control (mdnyam manasd niyamyā) and does his karmas without attachment to them (asaktah) , <sup>163</sup> It is impossible for any man to be without karma ( akarmaknt ) even for a moment <sup>164</sup> Absolute



cessation from activity is death. So long as a man lives, he cannot help doing karma; for the karmas that have been already credited and debited to his account will force him into more karmas . 16r> He who is ignorant ( avidvan ) follows his karmas with personal attachment ( saktah ) to them, with his ego involved deeply in them. However, the man who knows (vidvan) should follow his karmas with a spirit of detachment ( asaktah ) and for collective welfare of the people (lokasamgraha) . loc This check, therefore, refers to the spirit, the attitude to be developed, with which man is to follow his activities throughout his life.

And then there is the second important check on man's actions, the external check. In doing his karmas, man is to follow his duty ( dharma ). He should not be led by his senses (indriya); rather, he should carry out the duties which are his dharma , and which he is born to do. It is better to die while following one's own dharma ( swadharma ) , however worthless or bad (vigunah) it may appear, but it is dangerous to follow that of another ( paradharma ) 167 Those who follow their own duties (sve sve karmanyahhiratah ) shall attain the fulfilment of existence (samsiddhim) , 168 There is no sin ( kilbisham ) in undertaking activities in accordance with one's own natural propensities or aptitudes ( svahhdva-niyatam karma ). 169 Even though such karma seems to have faults, shortcomings or blemishes ( sadosham apt), one should not abandon it ( na tyajet) ; 170 for, all karmas are accompanied by faults in them, just as fire is accompanied by smoke . 171 The Gita explicitly declares that doing one's own karmas (karma-yoga) in accordance with dharma is far better than abandoning karmas altogether (karma-samnyasa) . 172 This check on man's activities refers to the problem of the kinds or types of karmas to be undertaken and carried out. Only the right kinds of karmas in accordance with

163. Gi. iii, 7.

164. GI. iii, 5 : na hi kaschit a j rtam apt jatu tishthatyakarmakrit .

165. GI. xviii, 60. 166. Gi. in, 25.

167. Gi. iii, 35. 168. Gi. xviii, 45.

169. Gi. xviii\* 47. 170. Gi. xviii, 48.

171. Gi. xviii^ 48. 172, Gi. v, 2.

his natural talents, temperaments and inclinations, as suggested by the Dharma-Sastras for each different type of temperamental groups, should be undertaken and carried out by him.

In the last Adhyaya of the Gita, Sri Krishna gives a more precise definition of the terms karma-samnydsa and karma-tydga used in this connection. By karma-samnydsa is to be understood, not the abandonment of all karmas, but the abandonment of the claim or desire for their fruit. "By samnydsa, learned men understand the renunciation of actions done with the desire for fruit (karmyadnam karmandam nydsam) ; and by tydga , wise men understand the renunciation of the fruit of all actions (sarva-karma-phala-tydgam) 17B , not of actions themselves. On the other hand, "indeed, the giving up of the karmas prescribed (niyata) by the Sdstras is not proper ". 174 In the same strain, Sri Krishna again declared: "Your duty (claimed authority) relates to the performance of your karmas only (karmanyevddhikaras-te) , unmindful of the fruit or result ( phala ) ; in doing karma, you ought not to possess the motive of fruit (karma-phala-hetuli) ; nor should you be inclined to inactivity (md te sango } stvakarmani) 175 The renunciation of karmas through deluded understanding (moha) is said to belong to the tdmasa nature; their abandonment through fear of physical suffering belongs to the rdjasa kind; but when they are performed without attachment ( samgam ) and also without the desire for fruit (phalam), then such a renunciation (tydga) is sdttvik a tydga ; 176 and, of course, it is the most desirable of tydgas . "It is not possible for those who live in bodies with flesh and blood (deha-bhritah) to renounce karmas completely; but he who renounces the fruit of karma (karma-phala-tyagi) is verily to be called the (real) tyagi . 177 And those who renounce the desire for

173. Gi. xviii, 2. 174. Gi. xviii, 7.

175. Gi, ii, 47.

176. Gi. xviii, 7-9. For the meaning of sat tv a, rajas and tamas as psychological qualities innate in man, see below, ch. viii.

177 Gi, xviii, 11. R. G. Bhandarkar had pointed out that the insistence on karmas being done without any regard for the fruit is not new. The lsc-phanisbad says in the 2nd verse that "a man should desire to live a hundred years doing actions resolutely, and in that way and in no other, will action not contaminate him/' cf. also Chhdnd. Up. iv, 14, 3 : Brih. Up iv, 4, 23 : Maitr. Up, vi, 20. See Bhandarkar : "V aishnainsm\* Saivism, and Other Minor Cults " p. 27.

fruit ( phalam ) of their karma become free from the bondage of birth (janma-bandha) and attain that supreme goal i.e. mukti. 175

All this means that the karma theory so far described implies that man is born due to his past karmas , and that all that he has to do and has not to do, that he will do and he will not do, will react again on his past karma and may create tendencies for new karmas. The whole theory is based on the principle that every action is followed by a reaction. Nothing that is thought or spoken or done by an individual can escape being credited or debited to his account, as the case may be. One can never disown one's actions. The theory further implies that so long as man continues karmas , whether by body, mind or speech, he is going to be born again and again to atone for them and even to create new ones. Moreover, freedom from the round of births and deaths cannot be obtained until freedom from karma is obtained.

And yet, with all this, it does not at all imply, – as could be seen from our discussion, – that this freedom has to be acquired by resorting to asceticism, or by leading a life of inactivity, or a life of not doing any karma. It is, on the contrary, fully recognised that a life of absolute inactivity is never possible for any one, so that the question of its desirability cannot even be raised! What the theory of karma , properly interpreted, implies is that only the right karmas should be performed, recognizing fully, that the particular position in which any individual has come to be – the birth in a particular varna or family (kula), the worldly happiness or unhappiness which surround him, and so on – is the result of his past karmas and not a mere accident or chance or luck. The individual has to realize this and fully understand its implications. He has to atone for, or enjoy the fruit of, his past karmas; but, while doing this, he should follow the path of right karmas; that is to say, he should follow his svadharma , so as to control the trends of his future karma . The Gita insists that only thus can one counter-act one's own past karma and safeguard himself from the future effects of karma . 179 The Mahabharata and Smritis, too, agree with this basic attitude . 180 Yajnavalkya, for instance, has said that the dharma or adharma which an individual follows form the seeds of

178. Gi. ii, 51.

180. See above.

179, See above.

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the store of his karma, 181 therefore, he says, he has tried\* to lay down the proper dharma , which, if followed by man, would secure salvation (mofcia) for him.

Evidently, such a philosophy of life is far from the unpromising determinism or fatalism which some have tried to make of it! The fact that our deeds – whether past or present, whether mere mental, physical or both, – affect our lives, and in that sense and to that extent form part of the tendencies or forces that direct the shape of our lives is what is basically accepted by the karma theory. Nevertheless, the imposition of particular checks and disciplines on life and conduct further implies that it is within our power to twist, modify or alter the effects of our previous karmas (which now becomes our ‘destiny’) by better and more regulated karmas . This is, in fact, according to the Hindu, a rational philosophy of life, which asserts that one can never disown one’s acts, once they are committed, but surely one can counteract their effects if one has the will to do so. For after all, daiva or destiny is not something that has been imposed on us from without; it is the accumulated effect of our own past doings, a reaction of our own actions , and as such, of our own making. But for the very reason that it is of our making, it is, or exists , though it is invisible (adrishta) to us, and must be accepted as a fact and reckoned with, though it can be counteracted. In terms of science, every action is followed by reaction (effect) ; but the reaction, if undesirable or undesired, can be counteracted. And the ‘Freedom of the Will’ operates in choosing the ways and means to accomplish the required counteraction. Indeed, we had the freedom of the will previously too, when we chose those karmas which have now become responsible for our present daiva (destiny); and therefore, virtually, it may as well be said that it is we ourselves who have chosen our present destiny! So, we may put it thus: If karma is denoted by action, its reaction, which, as reaction, is not under our control, but may, in fact, control us to some extent, is daiva or destiny; but there is yet the capability within us to counteract daiva , which is by choosing sukarma or svadharma, which, of course, naturally requires the exercise of self-control, i.e., control over our tendencies to act wrongly which are the result of our previous

181. Yaj. i, 1.

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karmas and their reactions.

Here again, also, there is a considerable insistence on the principle of self-reliance and self-dependence in regard to shaping one's own future . Since you have been yourself entirely responsible for what you are, no one else, not even God, will help you to undo what you have done. No other power but your own self can make or mar your future.

It is a well known law of science that nothing is lost in the material realm. For the Hindu, this Law of Nature extends to the moral realm too; as with matter, so with men, since both are parts of Nature, which is a system, an organisation, a cosmos, not a chaos, and is governed by laws. To 'forgive and forget' may be a good advice for men to follow in regard to their personal or mutual relations; but Nature never forgets. She keeps a complete record of all events and activities, material and moral, and reactions must follow as necessary consequences of actions. The process is automatic so to speak. Many of us would like several of our deeds, especially, misdeeds to be forgotten by others, and men do forget many things because they have short memories. And also, men do make appeals to other men to forgive and forget. But such 'wishful forgetting' never occurs in Nature.

Further, in regard to human actions in the moral realm, according to the Hindu, the agent or the doer himself has to atone for or counteract the effects of his own actions. No one else will be able to help him in that regard, – not even God, or prayers or repentance, or craving for forgiveness. To expect one's deeds to be forgotten and forgiven is to expect something to happen against the very Law of God Himself. It is to think, as it were, that what has happened has not happened, – which is absurd! Repentance, prayers and meditation rather help to elevate one's mind on to a higher plane, to purge one's thoughts, and to motivate him to follow *svadharma*, better deeds, which if, duly executed, would make up for or atone for the blemishes of our past deeds; they cannot efface or erase the effects of those past deeds by themselves. In his analysis of the Karma theory, Sir Herbert Risley, himself a keen student of Hindu thought, has remarked: "Nor does the strength of Hinduism lie in its metaphysics. There are those who hold that the idea of Karma, the theory that on each sin as it is committed there is passed a judgment from which there is no appeal, stands on a

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higher plane and exercises a greater moral influence than the Christian doctrines of repentance and forgiveness of sins. The belief in a spiritual backstairs does not necessarily make for righteousness.”\* Man himself, therefore, according to the karma theory, is the master and maker of his own destiny.

Therefore, according to the Hindu view, each one of us is born to do his or her part in whatever position we find ourselves in order to undo the effects of past karmas, and so to behave through life that we may get moksha. This means that for the Hindu, the individual is born not fully to use all his faculties, not fully to take from the world of the physical, the biological, the economical and the social existence around him as best as he can and as much as he can, which is the aim of all Western thought – of course consistent with such full opportunities to other individuals; with the Hindu, on the other hand, it is a question, not of using to the utmost, but using the just and the appropriate quantity and quality for undoing the effects of the past karma and for not creating a new world of karmas which may react either in this life or in lives to come. The karmas are expected to be so manipulated as not to disturb the equilibrium or the balance or the stability of the Universe. One must take out, from the world outside, only so much as is just enough for one, not more, not even less. Anything more or less might disturb the equilibrium of the system of jagat, and thus might entangle one into the medley of karmas. To be able to achieve this, we must follow our sva-dharma which defines our limitations and our specific duties with reference to definite, as also possible and probable situations. It is so devised as to enable one to acquit oneself just equitably. For, as the Gita has said, even a little of this karma will be able to protect us from great dangers. 182

So far about what is usually termed as the karma-marga, the ‘way of action’, as a method of solving the problem of existence. But there are two other ‘ways’ (mārgah) discussed in the Gita itself for the solution of that problem, viz. Jñāna-mārga and the Bhakti-mārga. The followers of Jñāna-mārga would maintain that

\* Risley, H. : The People of India, 2nd Ed. by W. Crooke. Thacker, Spink, Calcutta and London, 1915. Sir H. Risley was a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1873-1910, and served as the Director of Ethnography for India.

182. "svalpctmapyasya dharmas^a trayate mahato bhayat ,} t Gita, ii, 40.

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it is knowledge 183 (Juana) that leads to the goal of^5e\$d^fC  
mukti, while the followers of the Bhakti-rruiringa maintai 1 ■ , , "f  
is devotion ( bhakti ) to God and self-surrender to Him that leads  
one to that goal. The Gita has attempted to bring the three margas  
into harmony with each other But before takmg over this point,  
we shall do well to grasp the Gita interpretation of jndTia and  
bhakti as leading to mukti.

We take up JnUna-marga first The Jnana-marga is discussed  
in the fourth Adhyaya and also m the seventh Adhyaya of the  
Gita. Sri Krishna says: "Actions pollute ( hmpanti ) Me not; nor  
have I any desire for their fruit (karmaphala) ; he who knows  
(abhijandti) Me to be such shall never be tied down ( badhyate ) by  
karmas. It was with this knowledge that, m ancient times, those  
who were desirous of attaining salvation performed actions; you 1  
also (O Arjuna), therefore, perform actions as men of old did in  
olden times. : " 184 Here, knowledge is said to be the essential means ;  
towards the salvation of man not for the purpose of dispensing with  
the karmas but for the purpose of giving the karmas their due  
meaning and value. Knowledge is essential as an auxiliary to the  
proper valuation of karmas. "Even the wise man is puzzled as to  
what should be done and what should not be done (kim karma  
kim akarmeti) . 185 Therefore, it is essential to acquire the know-  
ledge of the real nature of and distinction between "action" (kar-  
ma), "forbidden action" ( vikarma ) and "inaction" (akarma) . 18fi  
"That man whose karmas are burnt away and are therefore puri-  
fied by the fire of knowledge (jndndgnidagdhakarma) , and, more-  
over, whose karmas are free from any motive or deliberate expec-  
tations of particular results thereof ( kdmassamkalpavarjitah ) is  
called a pandita. 187 And, the entire (samagram) karma of such a  
man, whose attachments are dead, and whose mind is fixed on  
knowledge (jndndvasthitachetasah) , and who performs actions in the  
spirit of a sacrifice (yajndya) is completely destroyed. 188

Here we enter upon another important conception fundamen-  
tal to life and existence propounded by the Bhagavadgita. Man is

183. See footnote No. 94 ante, for the connotation of the word 'knowledge'  
in this connection.

184. Gi. iv, 14-15.

186. Gi . iv, 17.

188. Gi. iv, 23.

185. Gi. iv, 16.

187. Gi. iv, 19.

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to perform actions in a spirit of sacrifice, in a spirit of self-surrender. Actions performed without this spirit of sacrifice (yajñdr̥that anyatra) would bind one to karma (karmabandhanah); therefore they are to be performed with that purpose, casting off all thoughts of one's own self (muktasangah), 189 "From food all creatures are born; from rain is food produced; rain is produced by sacrifices (yajñdt); and sacrifice is the result of action (karma). Know that all action has its source in the Vedas, and the Vedas are originated from the One (i.e. God) Who knows no decay (aksara); therefore, the all-pervading Vedas are ever present in a yajna 190 He who does not help the wheel (chakram) of life thus revolving here below, lives in vain, passing his life in sin and by the gratifications of the senses (indriyaramah). 191

Later, in the same Adhyāya, the meaning of yajna is further amplified. The wise man (vidvān), says Sri Krishna, should be completely unattached (asaktah), ever with the good of the people at heart (lokasamgrāham), just as the ignorant act with self-attachment (saktah) to action. 192 The self-surrender must be thorough – "Dedicating all actions to Me, with a mind fixed upon the Supreme (adhyatmāchetasa), engage yourself in battle (O Arjuna) without desire, without any notion of "mine", and (thus) without any mental grief or worry or anxiety (vigatajvarah)". 193 Indeed, in the next Adhyāya, a very wide meaning is given to this spirit of dedication, of self-surrender, of Yajna. All our actions are to be in dedication to the Universal Spirit – "Brahman is the dedication (Brahmārpanam) and Brahman is the offering (Brahmahvir); Brahman is the fire (Brahmāgnir) Brahman the sacrificer (Brahmandhutam); and Brahman is the destination to which he attains who meditates on Brahman (Brahma-karmasamadhina). 194 Therefore, "whatsoever you do, whatsoever you eat, whatsoever austerities you perform, do them as offering (arpanam) unto Me." 195 For, says the Lord, "by managing all your conduct in this manner, you will be free (mokṣyase) from the bonds of karma resulting in good (śubha) or evil (aśubha) consequences



189. Gi . Hi, 9. 190. Gi. iii, 14-15.

191. Gi. iii, 16. 192. Gi. iii, 25.

193. Gi. iii, 30. 194. Gi. iv, 24.

195. Gi. ix, 27 ; also cf. Bhḡgawata Purāna XI. iii, 38 ; and XI. xix, 9.

196. Gi. ix, 28.

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or fruits, and thus attaining that state of mind which renounces (the fruit of actions) (samnyasayoga-yuktdtmd) , you will reach mukti and come to Me.” 196

In this universal meaning given of Yajna, all karmas are conceived as the yajnas performed by man, all knowledge is also yajna performed by him. Life itself is conceived as a perpetual yajna, a perpetual dedication to God, or to the Universal Being, and consequently the karma-mārga, or the jñāna-mārga , as means of attaining the end of life are conceived as karma-yajna and jñāna-yajna respectively, dedicated to the Brahman , the Universal Being. The Yajna thus loses the original merely ritualistic meaning, and comes to attain a more human and also deeper and loftier significance. 197

To return to our discussion of the jñāna-mārga as the means of solving the problem of life in the Gita : Śrī Kīrṣṇa, at one place, says that of all the yajnas, jñāna-yajna i.e. self-dedication to knowledge is far superior ( sreyan ) to that which consists of mundane activities ( i.e. the karma-yajna ) ; for karma is entirely comprehended within knowledge ( jñāne parisamdṛyate ) . 198 Even the sinner amongst the sinners ( pāpabhyah pāpakṛittamah ) shall be able to cross (the ocean of samsara) by the aid of this boat of knowledge ( jñānaplava ) . 199 The fire of knowledge ( jñānāgniḥ ) reduces all karmas to ashes. 200 Indeed, there is nothing so sanctifying and ennobling in this world as knowledge. 201 To those who have their ignorance ( ajñāna ) destroyed by the knowledge of the self ( ātman ), such knowledge, like the sun, throws light on our understanding of ( prakāśayati, i.e. reveals ) That Supreme ( tat par am ). 202 And those whose minds are (fixed) on That, who have their souls identified with That ( tattatmanah ) , who have dedicated their all to That ( tannishṭhah ) , and who consider That as their final goal ( tatpara - yanah ) , depart never to return, their sins being destroyed by knowledge. 203

This 'way of knowledge' so far described may, however, be found difficult of accomplishment by the average man. To attempt

197. We shall have occasion to speak more about this later in this chapter- see pp. 59 ff. below.

198. Gi . iv, 33. 199. Gi . iv, 36.

200. Gi. iv, 37.

201. "Na hi jnanena sadris&m pavitrmiha vtdyate " – Gi. iv, 38.

202. Gi. v, 16. 203. Gi. v, 17.

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to know the nature of the Brahman is much difficult ( kleso'dhika - tarah ) } because the unperceived ( avyakta ) goal is difficult to attain for the "embodied" (dehavadbhzh) , 204 i.e for the human being. Therefore, another comparatively less difficult way is suggested by Sri Krishna for the attainment of salvation And that is the Bhak-timdrga. Those who dedicate their actions to Sri Krishna, and holding Him as the highest goal, worship Him and meditate upon Him with their minds fixed upon none but Him ( ananyenaiva ) – of such men He becomes, without delay, the deliverer from the ocean of mortal world 205 "That devotee (bhaktah) who hates no being, who is friendly and compassionate, who is free from attachment ( nirmamah ) and egoism (nirahamkdrah) , who is equally balanced in times of happiness and misery (samaduhkhasukhah ) , who is forgiving, contented, always engaged in yoga 3 self -controlled, firm of mind, and who has his mmd and intellect fixed on me ( maiyyarpztamanobuddhih ) is dear (priyah) to Me ." 206 In the opinion of Sri Krishna, those who ever fix ( nztyayukUih ) their mind on Him and worship Him with the highest faith (sraddhaya parayd ) , are the greatest of Yogis . 207

In combnation with this Bhakti-mdrga is also found, again, the doctrine of dedication of actions to which we have already referred before. "He who does actions for My sake (mat-karma-krit ) , whose highest ideal is Myself (mat-paramah) , who is devoted to Me ( mad-bhaktah ) , and who is free from attachment and enmity to any creature, comes to Me, O Pandava ." 20a A spirit of complete dedication and self-surrender to God is the main characteristic of a bhakta. All possessions, spiritual or material, are to be deemed

not as man's belongings but as God's; and they are to be used for Him to serve His purpose. That man is fit to attain salvation who worships ( sevate ) Him with the yoga of unswerving devotion (avyabhichdrena bhaktiyogena ) . 209

Again, in combination with bhakti, we also find the eulogy of

204. Gi. xii, 5. 205. Gl. xii, 6-7.

206. Gi. xii, 14 ; also cf. ibid.

207. Gi . xii, 2 ; cf. also iv, 47 ; 4 'Amongst all the Yogis, he who dwells in Me and worships Me with full faith in Me ( sraddhavan bhajate) is considered by Me the highest Yogi {yuktatamah) \*\*

208. Gi. xi, 55.

209. Gi xiv, 26 Note how the term yoga is suffixed to bhakti here.

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in ana m the Gita. By devoted love ( bhaktyd ) to God, the devotee is able to attain the knowledge of God, – what His extent is and what He is m truth ( tatvatah ); and by knowing the true nature of God, the devotee enters into Him. 210 Towards the close of the Gita Sri Krishna says- “He who will study this Holy Dialogue between us, will have offered unto Me the sacrifice of knowledge there is nothing better or superior (anuttamdm) ” 2X2

In a previous Adhyaya , four kinds of devotees ( bhaktdh ) are described. “Of men of virtuous actions who worship Me, there are four types: the afflicted ( drta ), the seeker after learning (jidanauh), the man who desires wealth or worldly happmess ( arthar thi ), and the man who knows (indnt). Of these, the knower (jnani) who is ever possessed of steady application (nitya-yuktah) and whose worship is addressed to the One Bemg ( ekabhaktir ) excels them all ( visishyate ); for I am exceedingly dear to the Jndru , and he is so dear (pnyah) to Me. All these are noble ( udarah ); but the Jndru I deem to be My very Self, for he, with steady application ( yuktatmd ) resorts to Me as the goal (gatim), than which there is nothing better or superior (anuttamam) .” 212

This passage fairly summarizes the mam attitude of the Gita towards the “way” of karma , jnana and bhakti. There is a clear indication here that the three “ways” are to be regarded as com-

plementary to each other, in as much as a man of good actions ( sukritin ) who has attained knowledge (jñāna) and is ever devoted to the One God alone ( ekabhakti ) will find out his salvation without delay. Thus a real synthesis of karma , jñāna and bhakti is made out here. Jñāna is the psychological foundation, the intellectual training, upon which the edifices of karma on the one hand, and of bhakti on the other have been established. The life of full devotion was conceived as hemmed in by a life of activity (karma) and a life of reflection (jīdāna).

Thus, bhakti , as a means of attaining the end, is conceived as based on an intellectual foundation and not on mere emotional or sentimental one. Nor is it to be taken resort to for redress against personal afflictions, griefs, or shortages in worldly comforts. It has been defined in the Sandilya Bhakti-Sutras as “affection ( anurakti )

210. G3. xviii, 55.

212. d. vii, 16-18

211. d. xviii, 70.

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fixed upon the Lord .” 213 And, the Bhakti-Sutras of Narada say that it is in the form of the highest devotion or affection towards some one . 214 It is not, however, a mere sentimental attachment to God ; 215 it is, rather, the result of a rational conviction that Isvara is the goal of human existence. Even for Ramanuj-acharya, who was one of the foremost among the bhaktimargis , bhakti is no mere sentimental attachment to isvara . It is attained by the devotee after passing through a long course of elaborate mental training. Its requirements are possession of the capacity of discrimination ( viveka ), freedom from attachment ( vimoha), constant meditation of God ( abhyasa ), doing good to others ( kriya ), wishing well to all ( kalyana ), speaking the truth ( satyam ), sympathy ( daya ), non-violence ( ahimsa ), and charity (dana ). 216 And in his Bhashya on the Gita, he has pointed out that the way to bhakti is achieved by knowledge and action (jñānakarmadugrihitam bhakti-ogam) 217

The roots and germs of the idea underlying bhakti could be traced back to the very ancient sources in Indian literature, the Vedas . The mantras, the prayers, the rituals, the different invo-

cations of Gods, with which the karmakanda 218 was practised in the Vedic days are some of the sources whence the later bhakti con-

213. Sandilya Bh Su. i, 2.

214. Ndr. Bh. Su. 2 – “sa hasmai paramapreniarupa” .

215. Which seems to be the Later interpretation of bhakti.

216. “Sarva-Darsana-Samgraha” , IV – From Radhaknshnan Indian Philosophy. Vol li, pp 704-5

217. Radhakrishnan : ibid. The same authority has drawn our attention to SvapneSvara’s commentary on the word “ anurakti V which is used to denote bhakti . ‘Anu’ means ‘after’ and ‘rakti means ‘attachment’; ‘Anurakti therefore means, according to Svapnesvara, attachment which comes after the knowledge of God.

218. Karmakanda is the ritualism which was taught by the Vedas , while the later Upanishads are said to deal with what is known as jnanakanda – see e\*g., Siva-Samhita, i, 20-22 Mr N K. Venkatesan, however, in an article on ‘the Upanishads of the Atharva-Veda” in the ‘ Quarterly Journal of the Mythical Society\* (New Series, vol. xxvi, No. 1, July-Octcber, 1936), points out that of the 108 Upanishads belonging to the four Vedas , 39 belong to the Jndm-kandt 62 belong to the 'Karma-kanda, and 7 deal with miscellaneous tonics connected with the Karma-kanda. This means that the number of Upanishads dealing with the daily practices and rituals of the Hindus is larger than those which deal with their philosophical meditations.

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ception was developed. We have in the Rigveda, for instance, this prayer to Agni, “Oh Agni, be easy of access to us, as a father is to his son.” 219 Here the prayer to God proceeds upon the assumption of love or affection of God to men which is as natural as a father’s love for his offspring. In a later work, viz. the \$vetasva~ taropanishad, the very word bhakti is introduced, now for the first time. It tells us that unless the student has absolute faith or devotion ( para bhaktih) in God as well as in teacher (guru), he shall not be taught the sacred knowledge. 220

It was, however, the Bhagavadgita which first gave a strong impetus to the bhakti cult. It was made more popular later on by the Paurdnic tradition, especially in Bhdgavata Parana, the Vishnu

Parana , the Bhakti Sutras of Narada and Sandilya, by Ramanujacharya and other Vaishnavite leaders, and the Vishnu - prabandha, a work in four thousand verses by the twelve alvars or saints. Ramanujacharya, in the 11th century, invested the bhakti cult with fresh force. The spiritual monism preached by Sankaracharya who flourished from about 800 A.D. onwards, was considered by the Vaishnavites as opposed to their bhakti cult; and so, a reaction was aroused. Ramanuja (who flourished between 1175-1250 a.d. 222 ) tried to harmonize the bhakti principle with the belief in One Supreme Deity. Then came Madhva, Nimbarka, Ramananda, Kabir, Vallabha, Chaitanya and many other teachers of religion. Madhva (1197-1276) 223 enjoined the bhakti of God Vishnu. Nimbarka (about the 13th century) enjoined the worship of Krishna and his beloved Radha. Ramananda (14th century) preached the bhakti of Rama as the Supreme Deity. Vallabha (16th century) enjoined the worship of Bala-Krishna, the boy Krishna; and, his contemporary Chaitanya preached the worship of the boy Krishna and Radha. 224 In Maharashtra, the bhakti cult was prominently propounded by Maratha saints like Jnanadeva (born about 1271 and died 1293 a.d.), Namdeo (about the end of 14th century), Eknath (16th century) and Tukaram (first half of the 17th century) in the

219. i, 1. 220. Svet. Up. vi, 22-23.

221. See Macdonnell : "India's Past" , p. 148.

222. ibid. p. 149. 223. ibid, p. 150.

224. Bhandarkar R.G. : "Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism & Other Cults"; and Thoothi ; in Vaishnavism of Gujarat ", p. 88 ff.

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form of worship of Vithoba of Pandharpur. 225

Most important among the causes for the bhakti cult becoming so popular was that bhakti as a means of salvation was open to all alike – to women, to the Vaisyas , and to the Sudras } – nay, even to persons of the most sinful birth (pāpīyāṇaḥ)\ 226 There was no distinction of race, caste, creed or sex in the way of bhakti. Indeed, one of the greatest saints and leaders of the bhakti-marga Kabir 227 was a Moslem by birth. The jnana-marga of the Upanishads was too restricted a path of salvation being open to the male sex and that too of the first varṇa viz., the Brahmanas , who only

could give their full life to it. Bhakti , therefore, soon gained immense popularity owing to its universal appeal.

To return to the discussion of the three much debated 'paths or 'means of solving the problem of existence: A study of the Gita reveals to us the important fact that each of these three margas has a psychological foundation. Thus, the karma-marga, who believes in 'action as the chief marga of salvation, has to acquire a certain kind of mental discipline in order to do karmas which are to serve the end of his existence. He has to abandon all sense of attachment ( asakta , or asamga), to give up all ideas of 'mine and 'thine (mamata) and egoism ( ahamkara ) , and to perform karmas in a spirit of dedication to God, knowing full well that whatever he does is for the fulfilment of God's purpose and not his own, without any expectation ( avidya ) of a return of the fruit or result of that action ( karmaphala ) . The psychological implications of jnana-marga and bhakti-marga are not dissimilar to these, though in its later developments, bhakti-marga degenerated even to the extent of finding erotic meaning in bhakti and wavered between divine love and erotic sentiments finding expressions in the various narrations about the episodes of love between Krishna and the Gopis and Radha .

Our foregoing analysis of the several views on the solution of the problem of existence and the meaning and end of human life – whether it is called moksha, mukti or kaivalya , – will be enough to enlighten us regarding the controversies which have been raging

225. Bhandarkar ; op. cit ; and Ranade : “ Mysticism in Maharashtra /

226. GI. ix, 32 ; cf . the Bhagvata Purana IX, xiv, 21 – 4 “Bhaktih punati manushthan svapakanapi sambhavat”

2217. Of the 16th Century.

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on the supremacy of one or the other of the three margas – the karma-marga, the jnana-marga, or the bhakti- marga – as the most effective pathway towards moksha. It has to be remembered that these three margas by no means stand in antagonism to each other. On the contrary, they are usually supposed to be working in coordination with each other. The difference of opinion among the philosophers lies mainly in the assertion that one of these should be taken as of the primary importance (sreshtha), while the other

two have to be regarded as subsidiary or auxiliary to it. In this way have arisen the jñāna-mārga school of thought, the karma - mārga school of thought and the bhakti-mārga school of thought. Even the jñāna-mārga should not be supposed to be opposed to the karma-mārga. It should be obvious from our preceding survey that what the jñāna-mārga asserts is, not that the karmas should be absolutely abandoned, but only that they should be executed with the fullest knowledge about the nature of existence, and therefore the fullest understanding of the nature and purpose of karmas themselves. A close perusal of the citations from different authorities, given in the preceding pages, will clearly show that none of these have advocated a complete abandonment of actions at all, but all of these have asserted that the karmas which are 'natural to one's station in life , ) – to use Bradley's expression, – which one is born to carry out, (svabhdvanyatam karma, sahaṇam karma, etc.), considering one's natural propensities, tendencies and aptitudes should be carried out in accordance with one's own dharma. And Dharma is defined for the individual by the Vedas ( frutiḥ ), the Smritis (sacred tradition), the conduct of good men ( saddchdraḥ ) and the ultimate satisfaction of one's own conscience ( svasya cha priyamdtmanah) r 2 \* Early Hinduism, which was concerned with actions centred round the yajna , was, in a sense, an activist religion in contrast with later Hinduism which was concerned with reflection and medi-

228. Also, see e.g. ante, pp. and again in Ch. viii, the story of the butcher who adhered to his dharma.

229. Man. ii, 12 ; also cf. ii, 6. These are, according to Manu, the four-fold means of defining dharma ; YSjñavalkya, who repeats all these four as the roots of dharma (dharmantulam ) , adds one more – 'the desire which springs from a good resolution" ( Samyak samkalpajo kḍmo) Yaj. i, 8. For a fuller meaning of the term dharma, see also next chapter.

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tation, as in the Upanishads The Vedic tradition said that man can return to the source of his origin by doing all the Vedic karmas , by doing the duties as laid down in Vedas , the sacrifices, the vartia-dharma and the dsrama-dharma etc., whereby salvation was promised – a sort of mechanical or routine karmayoga, by doing , not by thinking or meditating ; jñāna and bhakti, knowledge and faith, were secondary. All the yajnas , the prayers, the offerings of all the nice things of life – all this was done primarily as items of



karma . In the Jaiminiya-^Sutras, for instance, for all practical purposes, Juana has no place. The Purva-Mimdn sd refuses to give any position to the j nani. All karmas , in its opinion, would lead to mukti. He who desires to reach heaven will perform sacrifices ( yajna ) ; 230 for sacrifices confer immortality, in the opinion of Jaimini , 231 Indeed, by the performance of the "Asvamedha" sacrifice, (in which the horse, asva, is sacrificed) , one is able to conquer the world, death, sins, even the sin of murdering a Brahmana. 232

In the Upanishadic teachings, however, Yajna came to be considerably looked down upon. This was the starting point of the difference between the Purva-Mimdn sd and the Uttara Mlmdnsd schools. The Sutras of Badarayana which belonged to the latter school and which were popularly known as the 'Vedanta philosophy 7 , taught, in one sense, an anti-vedic mdr ga. For them, Yajna by itself had little meaning. The difference between the old Hinduism and the new Hinduism was the difference between a life around Yajna and a life without Yajna. The old Hinduism is a life of active optimism, in a sense. It was concerned with attempts at earning power. The particular institution of monasticism, of self-suffering, is absent in Old Hinduism. Life was regarded as a striving of purposes through several elements which were to be won over with the help of Yajnas. In a sense, therefore, it is the Upasand, the control of a deity with a kind of magical charm by which it was propitiated and subdued, that the old Hinduism concerned itself with. Thus old Hinduism was an activist type of religion as opposed to reflective one. Even when reflection was attended to, it was carried in terms of, and to promote, action. The magico-

230. " Yajate svargakamah

231. " Yajaterjdtampurvam " and "Apoma somamamrito babhumd etc .

232. "SaTvmtiokanjayatt, mtityum tarati , pdpmdnam tarati , brahmahatydni tarati, yo' hvamedham yajate ", etc.

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religious rites of the Vedic Aryans following m what they called the karma-hdnda (field of activity) , centred round the Y ajna~kunda, or Agm-kuiida, that is the Fire-place. Fire was the medium, a kind of agent, between man and God. It was through Fire (agni) that man performed a yajna offering the best things that he could afford for the Gods— milk, ghee, gram and cattle.- 3 " All life was thus revolving round the Yajna-kunda. The life of activity was

conceived as lying in and through sacrifice and giving away what  
 •was very dear to man, his necessities of life. The life of the individual, of the family (kula) , of the village (grama), of the community, was centred round the sacrificial fire.

However, this early phase of Hinduism, known as the karma-kanda , was so much overdone that the karmas grew into mere routine ritualism. This ritualism soon came to be looked down upon with contempt by the time the Upanishads appeared. It was attacked and corrected by later meditative and reflective life. The contempt of yajna ritualism, e.g , is thus expressed: "These boats in the form of yajna are weak ( adruhih ); those fools who regard these v performed by the eighteen persons (the host, the hostess and sixteen priests) as yielding blessings are certain to attain old age and death ." 234 And again, "these boats of Yajna are fragile – think not over the many words of the scriptures, for they will bring you fatigue. What shall I do with these? For they cannot secure immortality for me. Grant me, O Lord, that knowledge which has secured immortality for thee ." 235

Therefore the Upanishadic seers set themselves to the task of discovering a new method of reaching salvation. This was done, not by completely discarding the yajna, but by giving a new interpretation to it. Yajna had now to be in terms of the inner life, not in terms of the external and formal ritual observances Contemplation of the nature of the ultimate reality, Brahman, was therefore, a way to realizing moksha ; and so Yajna was reinterpreted in terms of jnana. Thus, the Yajna-parampara, the tradition of the yajna, was kept alive, but re-oriented, though in a different garb now . 236

233. cf. Thoothi : "Vaishnavas of Gujarat " p. 32. 234. Mund. Up. n. 7.

235. See Thoothi : "The Vaishnavas of Gujarat ", p 34

236. There are instructions regarding this inana-yajna in the Upanishads, eg. in Chhnd Up. in. 17, 1-14; and in Taitt. Aran. x. 48, 64; Sat. Br. xi, I,

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This meaning of yajna, in terms of the spiritual and reflective life, was elaborated by the Upanishads and was given a fresh impetus by Sankaracharya and the teachers of his school who came after him. They interpreted, accordingly, the Vedas, the Upanishads , the Gita and the Radarayana Sutras in the light of the jnana-marga. In the period of early Hinduism, yajna had been a means to an end

superior to itself and there were attempts to rationalize a life of Yajna in terms of superior purposes, aims, and destiny of life. All this living spiritualism of early Hinduism is missing in the later period starting from the Upanishads in which philosophical reflections were carried out. Sankaracharya and his followers merely meditated upon and discussed philosophical problems, which is a characteristic also of Buddhism and Jainism. On the meditative side, the Upanishadic teachings were considerably supported by the Buddhistic and the Jaina schools of thought. Sankaracharya takes up the Vedic tradition, the Upanishadic tradition, and the Buddhist and Jaina traditions and tries to harmonize all of these and secure a balance between the Vedas and the Upanishads, the Gita, and the Badarayana-Sutras (i.e. the prasthanas-trayi). It may be remembered that Sankaracharya was popularly known as Prachchanna-Buddha, a Buddha beneath the surface or at heart, in view of the fact that for him, as in Buddhism, both the world (jagat) as well as worldliness (samsara) were illusion (mithya). On the other hand, in spite of the injunctions of their founders, both the Buddhistic and the Jaina traditions set up by their followers take up practically to the karma doctrine. In Jainism, for instance, meditation itself resolved into a matter of ritualistic observance; thus, a Jain is expected, for instance, to read or recite a particular grantha (religious book) for a particular number of times every day.

Now, the re-interpretation and re-orientation of yajna in terms of jnana, as pronounced by the Upanishads, Sankaracharya and others, was again carried to such an extreme extent that it became almost incompatible with the every-day life of an average man. The extreme form to which jnana-yajna philosophy led was of asceticism and renunciation of a life of activity (karma-samnyasa). The eulogy of inaction at its extreme tended to result in a wholesale condemnation of karma. In order to raise the one to its loftiest and to indicate its distinctive merit, the other was placed at the lowest in estimation.

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Also, like karma in the earlier days, jnana, too, soon became formalistic and fossilized, giving rise to a relish for outward forms of ascetic life. The extreme ascetic implications of the jnana cult must have caused a great deal of dissatisfaction among the masses of India. It was too much to ask the average man to believe that the world and

worldliness ( jagat and samsara) were all false (mithya) , on the ground that they were all appearance ( maya ),

Therefore, there emerged a new social need, a social demand, which had to be satisfied and Hinduism had to be again re-interpreted to suit the needs of the average man in India. In the new re-interpretation, account had to be taken of the past heritage ( parampara) of India; that could not be discarded in toto. The extremes and mistakes of the past, too, had to be avoided. Both the interpretations of the past, – the one in terms of the karma-yajna as well as the other in terms of jñāna-yajna – were, as we have seen, expressions of the social needs of their own times. Dissatisfied with the one as a solution of the problem of existence, the Hindu mind discovered the other; but then this latter was soon found incompatible with the actual every-day life of the Hindu. Therefore, the new interpretation of Hinduism had to be such as to take into account the life that has to be lived by the common man, and yet possess the dignity and majesty of a philosophy in order to be able to replace the philosophy of jñāna-mārgi. The karma-mārga had taken into account the common man's life, but soon failed to satisfy the Hindu with loftier ideas and ideals, who must have felt that what the karma-mārga resulted into was too mundane and low an aim of life. The jñāna-mārga, on the other hand, proved rather too lofty and impracticable an ideal, one far too removed from the day-to-day realities of life for the average individual to approach. Both these kinds of mistakes of the past had to be avoided now. And yet, the past tradition ( parampara ) had to be kept alive as far as possible; in fact, the new philosophy had to draw upon the past parampara itself.

All this was sought to be achieved by the introduction of the bhakti principle, especially by the thinkers of the Vaishnavite school, mainly at the instance of the Bhagavadgītā. The Gītā accepted the heritage of the past in that yajna, karma , jñāna, samnyāsa, dharma and even bhakti itself, were taken up and absorbed by it; but each of these was invested with a newer meaning, more compatible with

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the every-day life that is lived, and therefore more human. Yajna was interpreted as a discipline in self-surrender to the will of God (Uparipana or Brahmapana); karma was placed in opposition to a karma, inactivity, and made acceptable in life so far as it was actuated in accordance with the dharma of a man. Jñāna was explained as instrumental in acquainting man with the knowledge of

the greatness and the glory of God and Godliness; this was necessary in order to establish the existence of a Supreme Authority which is the b>all and end-all of everything, and thus to impel man to cultivate a spirit of activity in His name and for His sake without desire or expectations of its result, (i.e. to karma-samnyasa m its true meaning of karma-phala-samnyasa ) . And bhakti , towards which all these converge, with unswerving faith ( sraddha ) as its foundation, is the very pinnacle of the philosophy of life expounded by the Gita. It elevates and carries forward the old Yaj.ia tradition (Yajna-parampara) towards a living and ever-new interpretation. Life itself was conceived as a perpetual yajna , a perpetual surrender to God's purpose, not m terms of the libations of ghee, milk, butter, cattle, or grain (ie. vaidikam karma ) , nor in terms of mental contemplation (jnana ) , but in terms of giving up the entire self of man, – body, mind, intellect, heart and possessions. Truest and fullest living means the complete surrender of everything ( sarvarpana ) ; – that is the real yajna, the full yajna. And, all along, it is m this line of thought that the Hindu did, and does even today look upon life as a Yajna to be performed in terms of bhakti, of course in spite of and in the midst of human frailties.

Thus, it is the yajna-parampara that is sought to be interpreted by all Vedic writers, Upanishadic writers, the Bhagavadgita and the Bhashya-kara Acharyas. The Yajna-parampara is at the root of all Hindu scriptures and of the Hindu social psychology too. A very pointed instance of the persistence of this parampara , social heritage or tradition, is the fact that even today, the term yajamana (sacrificer) is very commonly used to denote the head of the house, or the householder, or the husband of a woman, according to the context in which it appears, at least in Maharashtra, of which the present writer has personal knowledge. The term yajamana, thus, has become synonymous with the term householder, or the chief of the family, as the case may be. This is how the socio-religious heritage of the Vedic India has persisted in the cutural consciousness of

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the Hindu even to this day.

Now, a close scrutiny of all the several philosophies of life presented hitherto will disclose to us more of the psychological unity behind them in spite of the historical differences of opinion and the ritualistic additions incidental in the course of their development. All these views are based on a certain attitude of mind which is fundamental m the midst of all the divergencies. Let us attempt

to understand this attitude.

In the first place, in considering the problem of existence, of life, we must, according to the Hindu way of thinking distinguish between the 'means' and the 'end'. The 'end' has been variously named as *mukti* or *moksa* or '*kaivalya*', though in fundamentals the general meaning of all these terms is the same. The reader must have already noticed this similarity; and, as we proceed, we will further see how it is the same in all cases. The 'means' have also been variously conceived as *jnana*, *karma* and *bhakti*. And here again, we have seen that though these differ from each other, none of them is exclusive or even independent of the other two. The important point is that these 'means' have to be made use of in accordance with *dharma*. So that, in one word, *dharma-samchaya* (accumulation of *dharma*) would be the means to attain the meaning and the end of human existence, viz. *moksa*.

And here we come to the main point of our inquiry, the psychology behind the 'end' and the 'means':

The first issue that the Hindu thinker raises here is: What is the end or the ultimate goal of life? Through one birth or several, whatever man has come to be has an origin. Why should he be born at all? Now, the Hindu believes that man is born and exists in accordance with the wish of God (*isvara*), of the Universal Principle, of the Primal Cause; and that he is to that extent separated, as it were, from it. And from birth to birth, all the struggles that he goes through and the means that he employs, are the means to go back to the source of his existence. We are all born to fulfil the will of God. All sparks that radiate from him must naturally desire to return to the original source. The whole problem seems to be reduced to this, that the whole universe is a process, first of evolution, – of the Many being evolved out of the One; and then of involution, – the Many trying their best to go back to the origin from which they came. From the point of view of this life of *samsara*,

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there is involution, from the point of view of the One, the *Isvara*, there is evolution. From Infinity, thus, finite souls appear and strive, with struggles and efforts, ultimately with a view to reach the Infinity; – this is the end of existence. And, the birth of the sort that we get, in the view of the Hindu, is bound to keep us as

finite and away from the infinite. It is therefore that we seek to be free from birth. However, we also get in Hindu Philosophy the theory that births are opportunities to serve the Infinite, that births themselves are thus also means towards the end, that dealings in space and time are necessary implemental factors which we should welcome, in so far as they give us opportunities to be one with the Infinite!

But, it may be asked\* Why should it be said that freedom from birth is salvation, is life found? The Western mind misinterprets such a theory in terms of not only death of this life, but of all existence. The Hindu's answer to this lies in another theory altogether. The Hindu feels that the things of life and world and worldly relations are fetters in the way of his freedom. And therefore, the fact of the birth which brings him in contact with these is, for him, the main cause of this difficulty, fundamentally because he feels a sense of separation (viraha or viyoga) from the One, the Universal Principle, while he really wants to merge into the One. Therefore, he finds himself divided between this longing to merge in the Universal and the problems of life, viz., world and worldliness (jagat and samsara). In his best mood he compares these two opposite attractions, these two desires, these two longings, and declares that if he wants to reach the one, he must abandon the other. This birth, then, is an opportunity to be one with, or to belong to, or to be united with, or to be about (according to the various philosophies) God. Otherwise, ordinarily he would be satisfied with what he gets of the world and worldliness, or seek more of it. Unless, therefore, that longing, that pang, that desire to go out of one's self to the source of his being is aroused, the problem of salvation has no place for an individual.

So, the problem of life, the problem of existence, is to return back, or to be alongside with, or to be one with the original source of existence. It is not to die, but to become deathless ( amara );

237. As with the Vaishnavaites, especially, Vallabhacharya. See, Thoothi \* Vaishnavas of Gujarat , pp. 93 ff.

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and, to be amara does not mean that one dies for ever, but one becomes free from births and deaths, that is to say, one becomes immortal. And, this sense of separation from the original source of life by the individual lies, thus, at the root of his search for salvation in terms of mukti as cessation of births and deaths, as cess-

ation of relation between the individual (jiva) and worldliness ( samsara ) .

All the institutions, social or personal, are, in view of these considerations, further means of Dharma-samachaya and are calculated to secure this end of mukti for the individual. The four asramas, the varna-organization, education, marriage, family, personal and social conduct – all these are means in this sense, to the one end, and must be followed in accordance with dharma. The finite personality itself is also a means towards the end. The finite personality is the object which is sought to be developed, birth by birth, asrama by asrama , stage by stage, day by day, throughout this life, throughout his connection with the various social institutions, throughout his private life, towards realising the one end, viz., moksha from whence there is no return to this worldly or any existence of a transient nature (anitya) .

It is on these fundamental considerations that the various dharmas – the varna-dharma , the asrama-dharma, the kula-dharma , etc. are founded. The basis of asrama-dharma, for instance, lies fundamentally in so helping the individual, each personally training himself up along such lines, that though he may have to live in, with and along with society, that is to say, world and worldliness (jagat and samsara) , he may so formulate and work out his career as to acquit himself equitably in the social universe, – which is only a part of the larger universe, – and in the world and worldliness, without being affected by these, so that when the time comes, the individual may, out of this training and discipline, be enabled to cast away these social bonds, go unto himself, and find himself out (atma-inana) , and thus secure the salvation to achieve which this birth is an opportunity and the things of life in it are so many instruments of salvation.

The whole system of asrama-dharma has this note of direction; the whole system of varna-dharma is based on such fundamental conception; and all other qualitative dharmas , like manushya - dharma ( dharma for human beings) , nitya-dharma, (usual

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dharma ) , naimittika-dharma (unusual dharma ) , kula-dharma (family dharma) , stri-dharma (woman's dharma) , purusha-dharma (man's dharma) , sadharana-dharma (normal or common dharma) , achara-dharma (dharma of good conduct) , vyavahara-dharma ( dharma of everyday dealings or day-to-day affairs), guna-dharma



(dharma according to one's characteristic abilities), desa-kala-dharma (dharma according to the place-and-time or environmental and temporal relevance), raja-dharma (dharma of the ruler), putra-dharma (dharma of the son), pitri-dharma (dharma of the father), pati- and patm-dharma (dharma of the husband and of the wife), guru-dharma or acharya-dharma (dharma of the teacher), sishya-dharma (dharma of the pupil), and even apad-dharma (dharma in times of calamity or emergency) and so forth, – each one of which refers to the respective role that an individual may have to take on at different times during the course of his life, – are all within the orbit of this fundamental chord of Hinduism, viz., that all dharmas and karmas can be so adjusted and apportioned that ultimately they will enable the individual to be free from his karmas and bring him face to face with the ultimate dharma, to cultivate and practice which alone he took birth. In the following pages we shall attempt to elucidate and explain this with reference to the different social institutions and aspects of social organization.

#### A NOTE ON E. J. URWICK AND HIS THE MESSAGE OF PLATO

Edward Johns Urwick (b. June 20, 1867, d Feb. 18, 1945) was Director of the (then) London School of Sociology and Social Economics 1904-10; Tooke Professor of Economic Science at King's College, London, 1907-14; Professor of Social Philosophy at the University of London, 1921-24; President of Morley Memorial College, 1903-23; Director of the Department of Social Science and Administration 1 in the London School of Economics, 1910-23; came to Toronto, Canada, in 1924 where Professor R. M MacIver, who was at the time Head of the Department of Political Economy at the University of Toronto, persuaded him to accept a Special Lectureship at the University. Two years later, when Professor MacIver went to Columbia University, Urwick was appointed his successor as Head of the Department of Political Economy. In 1928 he became the Director of the Department of Social Science, which is now called the School of Social Work, at the University of Toronto. He retired from the University in 1937, and continued as Emeritus Professor for some time. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and the author of *Studies of Boy Life in Our Cities* (1904), *Luxury and Waste of Life* (Dent, London, 1906), *A Philosophy of Social Progress* (Methuen, London, 1912, 2nd. Ed Rev. 1920), *The Message of Plato* (Methuen, London, 1920), *The Social Good* (Methuen, London, 1927), *The Values of Life* (Univ of Toronto, Canada, and Ox. Univ. Pr., London, 1948), and many important papers and articles including *Modern Industry: A Short Analysis of Some Outstanding Dangers in the Present Situation*, *Freedom in Our Time* (1933), *Liberalism True and False* (1938), *Social Philosophy and Social Work* (in *Training for Social Work*,

pub. by Univ. of Toronto, 1940) , The Building of the Community (in Social Welfare, 1936) . The interested reader may find his social thought and philosophy admirably summarized by J. A. Irving in his "Introductory Essay" to Urwick's posthumously published The Values of Life. The facts mentioned above are taken from Mr. Irving's "Essay".

1. It may interest the reader to note that on the title page of The Message of Plato (1920), Urwick's designation appears as "Head of the Ratan Tata Department of Social Science and Administration, University of London."

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Lest this may give an impression to the reader that Urwick was a mere "social philosopher", – by which term is understood, by many, an arm-chair speculator whose thinking is far removed away from the actual realities, – we quote below a few relevant passages from Mr. Irving's "Essay": –

"Urwick made an enduring contribution to education for social work .... he helped to establish courses for the preparation of social workers at the Universities of Liverpool, Edinburgh, Birmingham, and Glasgow – before similar courses were instituted even in American Universities. He maintained that the training of social workers should be soundly based on the social sciences, a principle now generally accepted. Of Urwick's contribution to the foundation of schools of social work an English authority has written: 'He has done more than any other individual to shape the development of standards of training in London and throughout the country' ....

" . . . . Perhaps his greatest contribution consisted in his provision of a philosophy of social work. Owing to American influence, there has been an insistent clamour in Canada for new and ever newer "techniques" in social work. Urwick was always calling social workers back to basic realities and principles; it is significant that one of the most recent trends is a return to his position .... It is no wonder that .... one still hears in Toronto references to Professor Urwick as the 'soul' of social work .... During his sixteen years' residence in Toronto, Urwick made significant contributions to the life and thought of the larger Canadian community, serving as committee and board member of several organizations . . . . "

As has been noted on p. 31, footnote no. 90, The Message of

Plato had escaped the notice of the present writer when he published the first edition of this book at the end of 1939; but Professor Urwick himself was kind and gracious enough to write to the publishers asking them to draw his attention to it. Soon after, this author had an opportunity to present a summary of Urwick's *The Message of Plato* in a paper on *A Survey of Research in Indian Sociology During Twenty-Five Years : 1917-42*, (in the volume entitled *Progress of Indian Studies – 1917-42*, pub. by the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Poona, 1942) , to which the reader may be referred. The book itself, however, must be read in the original,

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for Urwick presents his theses with such force, brilliance, beauty of language and expression, elevating thought, all of which will be missed in any summary of the work. And, it is not necessary to agree with Urwick's view that Plato borrowed his thought from Vedanta, in order to derive edification and enjoyment from a perusal of the book.

Commenting on the *Message of Plato* in his "Essay", Mr Irving remarks: –

" . . . . The uniqueness of Urwick's interpretation of Plato consists in the effort to show – without, it must be admitted, a sound basis in scholarship – that the Republic can only be adequately understood in terms of the religious thought of ancient India, more specifically in terms of Vedantism . . (He made) two large as-

sumptions, both of which may be seriously challenged: that there was in pre-Alexandrian times a fairly direct contact between India and Greece; and that the influence was profoundly felt by Plato ....

"It is maintained .... that Plato is best understood as a disciple of Pythagoras, and Pythagoras is best understood in terms of Vedantism. Nine of the twelve chapters of *The Message of Plato*, accordingly, are devoted to a detailed analysis of the Republic with the object of showing Plato's debt to ancient Indian philosophy. In this stimulating and often brilliantly written re-interpretation of the Republic, Urwick considers that Bks. I-IV treat of the preparation of the soul and give an account of what the Vedas call "the lower path"; Bks. V-VII treat of spiritual realization, or of the Path of Religion, and the last three Books discuss the dangers of the lower path

“The significance of Urwick’s study of Plato consists, however, in its dynamic affirmation of religious idealism rather than in the success or faflure of the attempt to establish inter-relations between Indian and Greek philosophy. He was .... too much of a realist not to see clearly that the experience, the common sense, the science, and even the religion of the modern Western world were in fundamental opposition to the supreme spiritual values he had discovered in Plato and in the Vedic literature. A reassessment of contemporary values was much more important than a formal defence of his position, and in this reassessment Urwick reviewed and found wanting, to a greater or less degree, modem man’s belief in

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Christianity, science, progress, and civilization ” – “The Social Philosophy of E. J. Urwick”, in E. J. Urwick: The Values of Life , pp. xi-lxv.

It is very interesting to note that The Very Rev. Dr. W. R Inge, Formerly Dean of St. Paul’s, England, remarks in his *Mysticism in Religion* (p. 99) : “Urwick in his excellent book *The Message of Plato* , in which he shows the close resemblance between Indian thought and the Platonic tradition, contrasts ‘the two paths’ which are open to our choice, the ‘path of divine knowledge’ and the ‘path of pursuit’ which the Indian thinks the Western nations have chosen to follow. The upper path brings into play powers of the soul which are dormant on the lower. These powers are often ignored or refused hearing. ‘Our thought is so little religious, it is concerned so wholly with the path of pursuit, in attainments and achievements and satisfactions in this world and the things of it, that we are almost content to identify religion with the goodness of the lower path – a religion of morality touched with emotion and linked to occasional worship, which satisfies us because it can be made compatible with a virtuous worldliness’.” – W. R. Inge: *Mysticism in Religion*, Hutchinson’s University Library, The Senior Series, London, 1948.

In the Preface to this book, Inge observes (pp. 7-8) : “ .... I have quoted a saying of Whitehead, that if Christianity and the Asiatic religions both show signs of weakness, one reason may be that they have remained too much aloof from each other. It is a reproach to us\* that with our unique opportunities of entering into sympathetic relations with Indian thought, we have made very

few attempts to do so. The Germans have done more work on Indian Philosophy than we have. I am not suggesting that we should become Buddhists or Hindus, but I believe that we have almost as much to learn from them as they from us”

\* i.e., the Britishers.

## CHAPTER 111

### THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

#### OF THE SYSTEM OF THE FOUR ASRAM AS

Dharmo visvasya jagatah pratishtha

loke dharmishtham praja upasarpanti  
Dharmena pdpam apanudanti dharme sarvam pratishthitam  
tasmad dharmam paramam vadanti

– Mahdhndrdyanopanishad, 22.1

Dharma is the mainstay of the entire moving world. In the world, people approach the most ardent follower of Dharma. They shake off sin by Dharma. Everything is established in Dharma. Hence they say that Dharma is supreme.

Na rajyam naiva raja cha na dandyo na cha dandikah  
Dharmenaiva prajdh sarve rakshanti sma parasparam

– Mahdbharata.

Neither the state nor the king, neither the mace (by which the authority punishes law-breaker) nor the mace-bearer govern the people; it is only by Dharma that people secure mutual protection.

nPHE Hindu sdstra-kdras (i.e., those who have written the I sastras , the scientific treatises) have taken man into account as a social being with reference to four broad factors that influence his life and its conduct: He is considered in relation to\* (i) desa, (place, region) which may be said to be the regional approach to the study of society; (ii) kola (time) which, we may say, constitutes the historical approach to the study of society, (iii) frrama (effort) which takes into account man with reference to his nurture and development in the contemporary environment; and (iv) guna (natural traits) , which refers to the natural inherent

psycho-biological equipment of man.

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The importance and significance of 'place' and 'time' or geography and history in the activities and behaviour of man has been acutely recognised by the Hindu thinkers; and the Royal Sage (Rajarshi) Bhlshma teaches us, indeed, that according to the conditions, demands and exigencies of the time-and-place (desa-kala), what is otherwise dharma may become adharma, and what is adharma may become dharma, for the time being. Evidently, however, it is not possible to visualize and anticipate all the probable variations of the locale (desa) and the times (kala) which human beings are likely to be confronted with, and hence, it may be said, no generalizations have been attempted by the Dharma - Jastara-karas regarding men's conduct under conditions such as may be peculiar to these two. Indeed, the recognition of desa and kala as significant factors affecting dharma itself is a tacit acceptance by the Jastara-karas of the fact that despite their attempts at canalizing and regulating man's conduct of life and behaviour through dharma, this is not to be taken as a rigid, static principle but has to be allowed a certain flexibility, a modifiability, a dynamic potentiality for its operation to suit the conditions dictated by the locale and the times. And, moreover, to speak of dharma itself becoming adharma and vice versa according to the times and the locale is really to speak of much more than just allowing the possibility of modifications in dharma; it is to ask men to be prepared for such complete and radical changes in dharma which may even be contradictory to the generally sanctioned dharma practices in order to suit the exigencies of the times and the conditions, if the latter necessitate such changes. It is in view of the impossibility of visualizing the emergencies of the locale and the times that the Jastara-karas have not attempted to dwell on the dharmas of desa and kala, while the dharmas of srama and guna have been discussed in such details by them.

And so, in the present work, we have attempted to make an investigation into the Hindu social thought under the last two headings, i.e. on man as a social being in connection with his natural development (srama), and in connection with his natural endowments (guna). Here we may note that in substance, all the Hindu sages agree that any plan or scheme of social organization

1 Maha Sdnti. 78, 32.

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which aims at the best functioning of every human being as a social unit, must, in the first instance, take him into account from these two aspects: First, it must consider man as a social being with reference to his training and development in the natural and social environment in order to enable him to fulfil the final aim of his existence; and secondly, this has to be co-ordinated with another scheme which studies man with reference to his natural endowments, dispositions and attitudes. The first of these is the problem undertaken in the scheme of the asramas ; the second is thought out in the scheme of the varnas.

The two organizations of the Asrama and the Varna (varnat-rama-vyavastha) , which, to put it briefly, refer to the problems of the nurture and the nature of man, rightly serve as the corner-stones of the Hindu theory of social organization. And, we may also note here that the scheme of the asramas as thought out and devised by the Hindu is a unique contribution in the whole history of the social thought of the world, without even a parallel to it in any other thought-system, excepting, perhaps, to some extent, in Plato's The Republic \* The same may be said to be true to a great extent of the varna-organization also.

Now, both the schemes of the asrama as well as the varna presuppose, and are fundamentally based upon, a certain point of view in regard to the problem of life and its conduct, upon a certain basic outlook, a certain philosophy of life; this fundamental philo-

\*As has been already noted in the Appendix to ch. ii. Professor E. J. Urwick concludes in his book The Message of Plato that Plato borrowed the ideas he has expressed in his dialogues from India's Vedic thought. He has advanced several arguments in favour of this view.

cf. the special review article by the well known German sociologist Leopold von Wiese on "DIE KLASSISCHEN GRUNDLAGEN DER SOZIAL ORGANISATION DER HINDUS" (The classical Basis of the Social Organization of the Hindus') in Kyklos, Fasc. 1, 1955, pp. 72-81. The original article is in German, with summaries appended in German, English and French.

L. von Wiese was the first among Western Sociologists to have given space in a sociological system to a discussion of dharma as a principle governing social life in his German works, Beziehungslehre (1924) and Gesellschaftslehre (1929) which have been, adapted and amplified by Howard Becker and published in

English as Systematic Sociology, by L von Wiese and H. Becker, pp. 772, Wiley, New York, 1932. Pitirim Sorokin of Harvard is another important sociologist who has been giving careful attention to the early Indian thought, as is evidenced in some of his recent publications. (See bibliography.)

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sophy of life was the topic of our first chapter. There we have discussed the ways in which the problem of existence and human destiny was conceived by the Hindu, and how attempts were made to arrive at a basis for the solution of that problem. In this chapter and in those that follow, we shall attempt to find out how, on such basis, the whole superstructure of the Hindu social institutions has been planned and erected so as to give effect to the principles enunciated in the first chapter, within the orbit of the practical day-to-day life of the Hindu. In other words, in the first chapter, we dealt with the theory of the problem of life and its solution, while in this chapter and in the chapters that follow, we are going to consider the practices based on that theory, by following which the ideals preached by the theory could be realized.

And here lies, broadly speaking, what appears to be one of the main distinctions between the Hindu way of understanding, tackling and solving social problems and the Western way. In the West, generally speaking, the social sciences, as such, of to-day are mainly built up straight in terms of the relations between man and man, and between man and his environment. Rarely, if at all, would the social scientist take into consideration the more fundamental questions of the ultimate human values, of the ultimate aim and fulfilment of man's existence, of the basic social philosophy which does and should govern the super-structure of social practices, conduct and institutions and take such basic ideas and concepts as the starting points in his discussion. This is particularly true of the social scientists who are working in the field of economics and politics; and it is also true to a considerable extent of even those who are working in the field of general sociology, barring very rare exceptions like P. Sorokin, who is now considered to be "out of fashion" in sociological circles in his country by some of his colleagues just because he is interested in such problems. Of course, some sort of a social philosophy will always be found implicitly underlying any sociological discussion, but it is not given a conscious and deliberative consideration, it is not explicitly discussed and taken as the basic starting point in the modern treatises on social organization. Modern social scientists, and social scientists in general, are on the contrary inclined to



consider such questions of ultimate values as of more or less  
“speculative” nature, of “meta-physical” interest; on the other

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hand, they concern themselves directly with the “actual” and  
“factual” interactions between man and man and between man  
and his environment. These are their starting points, and also  
the main themes of discussion

A pointed attack against the “philosophical” approach to  
social studies on the bases of ethical values was made by Emile  
Durkheim, Lucien Levy-Bruhl and their school in France at the  
end of the last century and in the beginning of this century, among  
others. These writers vigorously advocated the “scientific”  
approach of studying “social facts” in the social sciences, which  
seems to have meant, for them, exclusion of any consideration of  
the ultimate and higher values of human life. We do not propose  
to enter here into the controversy of “social philosophy vs. social  
science”, but the interested reader may profitably peruse the  
relevant writings of Durkheim and Levy-Bruhl, and the spirited  
attack on their position by Simon Deploige\* who himself quotes

\*Simon Deploige . The Conflict Between Ethics and Sociology, Tr by C. C  
Matter. B. Herder Book Co., London, 1938

See also the present writer’s article on “ Fact and Theory in the Social  
Sciences ” in the Socio-Economist, Bombay, Vol II, u. 1940.

In this connection, the following, from a review of one of the recent books  
of Sorokin, by Dr. William L. Kolb of Tulane University, may be of interest to  
the reader . ‘Who reads Sorokin asks Dr. Kolb, and answers the query thus :  
“Whatever the answer to that question, sociologists generally are not included  
in the attentive group. To be sure Social Mobility and Contemporary Sociological  
Theories are frequently cited by Sociologists and are used by them in teaching  
and research. But the Dynamics and all its progeny, among which can be in-  
cluded the book under review, (viz, Social Philosophies in an Age of Crisis )  
are lost in sociological limbo. They are no longer even criticised, simply ignored.  
Sorokind is concerned with the study of ‘the how and why, the whence and  
whither, of man, society, and humanity’.”

“However,” adds Kolb, “Sociologists as professional men are not concerned  
with these problems. The mistaken use of Weber’s dictum of no value judge-  
ments, the pressure of the sources of research funds! and perhaps a deeply root-  
ed sense of despair conspire at the level of applied social research to confine the

social scientists to problems which accept the present social order and its movement as a given, thus closing the door to the development of a sociology of possibility. At the theoretical level, as Remhard Bendix has shown in a recent issue of *Commentary*, the image of man conceptually developed renders a value system based on human dignity and reason utterly irrelevant. Thus why read Sorokin ; why even bother to criticise him ?”

On the other hand, Kolb points out that this very attitude of neglect by the

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a large number of relevant excerpts from them

In sharp contrast with such attitude, the Hindu, in his discussions of social life and practices, first raises the fundamental question of the significance of man's existence on earth, gives consideration to basic questions of the relation between man and the possible ultimate purpose and fulfilment of his existence, and, upon such bases, seeks to define and formulate his relations with every other thing, person, event and circumstance in the world. Thus, for the Hindu, the individual's relations with the Ultimate Principle or the Universal or Primal Cause defines his relations with other men, with his family, with the group or society in which he lives or with which he comes in contact, with his village and his country, – and, indeed, with the entire animate and inanimate creation!

And this general statement of the case applies to the Ashrama theory which we propose to discuss in this chapter, reserving the discussion of the Varna theory for a later chapter (See ch. viii). The whole of the life of an individual is, for the Hindu, a kind of schooling and self-discipline. Now, during the course of this schooling, he has to pass through four stages, – four grades of training, as it were, – called the Ashramas. And, in regard to the ashramas, too, every item and stage and phase has to be defined in terms of the already defined relations between man and God. Here, therefore, practically we start with supernatural basis; upon this, we erect the superstructure of man's earthly career. The earthly existence has thus to be defined primarily in terms of dharma; and dharma has to be interpreted in the concrete in terms of karma. The ashrama scheme, therefore, defines our dharma in and through

intellectuals of our times in understanding and analysing values may itself be an indication of the degeneration of our society : “Contemporary social science is profoundly symptomatic of what the philosophers of history regard as the

decline of our society. Its scientific concentration on human manipulation represents an extreme form of the reduction of the human being to pure object/\* Kolb therefore admonishes the above current tendency among Sociologists.

'To ignore the contemporary philosophers of history is to risk the loss of our sociological souls, because, in the right or wrong fashion they are grappling with the essential problem of the moral and practical significance of social science in our contemporary society/' (Review by William L. Kolb, of P. A. Sorokin's Social Philosophies in the Age of Crisis, The Beacon Press, Boston, 1950, in The American Sociological Review, 16,2, [April 1961], pp. 267-68).

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a life of worldliness, of samsara, before it, and beyond its pale, and, in practice, it seeks to delineate the implications of dharma in terms of karma.

In order to understand the psycho-moral basis of the drama properly, it is advisable that we should look into the theory of the purusharthas which concern themselves with the understanding, justification, management and conduct of affairs of the individual's life in relation to the group, in and through the dramas. The purusharthas are four, viz., dharma, artha, kama and moksha. We speak of these purusharthas as the 'psycho-moral' bases of the drama theory, because, on the one hand, the individual receives a psychological training through the dramas in terms of lessons in the use and management of the purusharthas, while, on the other hand, in actual practice, he has to deal with the society in accordance with these lessons. It is in the light of the understanding of the meaning and place of the purusharthas in the drama scheme that we shall be able to comprehend the right method, way and outlook for the management of each of the dramas.

It is usual to translate these terms dharma, artha, kama and moksha in English by such words as morality, wealth, desires or passion, and salvation respectively. But the Sanskrit terms are potent with deeper meanings than these English words singly convey. Thus, the word dharma is derived from the Sanskrit root 'dhr' meaning 'to hold together, to preserve'.<sup>2</sup> The social implications and meaning of dharma as a principle for maintaining the stability of society is brought out by Sri Krishna in three verses in the Mahabharata: In advising Arjuna as to what is dharma he explains that "dharma is created for the well-being of all creation",<sup>2</sup> and further that "all that is free from doing harm to any created being is certainly dharma; for, indeed, dharma is created to keep all creation free from any harm"<sup>4</sup>. Sri Krishna proceeds, next, to

2. For the several stages of meaning through which the word has passed from the Rigvedic period onwards, see P. V Kane \* "History of the Dharmaśāstras", Section I, pp. 1-4

3. Maha Kama . 69, 57. "Prabhavā dharmā bhūtā dharmā-pravachanam kritam"

Also Maha. Sūti. 109 . 10. "Prabhavarthā dharmā-pravachanam kṛtam/Yas syat prabhava-samyuktas sa dharmā iti māhātmyam."

4. ibid. 58 ; u Yas syad ahimsā-samyuktas sa dharmā iti niichayak/akṛtam-sa bhūtā dharmā-pravachanam kritam. ,r

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give a still more comprehensive view of dharma: "Dharma is so called because it protects ( dharmatā ) all; dharma preserves all that is created. Dharma, then, is surely that principle which is capable of preserving the universe ". 5 Artha, on the other hand, is to be understood as referring to all the means necessary for acquiring worldly prosperity, such as wealth or power. And Kama refers to all the desires in man for enjoyment and satisfaction of the life of the senses, including the sex drive to which the word dharma more prominently refers . 6 The term refers to the native impulses, instincts and desires of man, his natural mental tendencies, and finds its equivalent, we may say, in the use of the English terms "desires", "needs", "basic or primary motives", "urges", or "drives" and the collective use of the term "kama" would refer to the totality of the innate desires and drives of man.\* The term is also often used in a broader sense to include socially acquired motivation too. Dharma, artha and kama, therefore, refer respectively to the moral, material and mental resources, accessories and energies available to man.

Of these three, artha and kama refer to two of man's earthly belongings, while dharma stands on a higher level. At its lowest level of manifestation, kama is understood in the sense of pure sex drive, and is said to be one of the six 'enemies' of human being . 7

5. ibid. 59 : "dharma ityāhur dharmā dharmā-pravachanam kṛtam/Yas syat prabhava-samyuktas sa dharmā iti māhātmyam"

Also. Maha-Sūti. 109-11 : –

Dharasndd dharmam itayahur dkarmena vidhritdh prajdh  
Yas sydt dharana-samyuktas sa dharma iti ntechayak.

And in Maha-Karna 119-59 : –

Dkarandd dharma ttyahur dharono dkdrayati prajdh

And in VaiSeshika Sutras : –

Yato abhyudaya-rdhsreyasa-siddhih sa dharmah

And in Matsya Pur a. cxlv (145), 47 :

Dharmeti dhdrane dhatur mahattve chaivam uchyate  
adharane mahattve vd dharmah sa tu rtiruehyate

6. cf. the discussion on the purushdrthas in Dr. Thcothi's "The Vcdsknavas of Gujarat ", pp. 44-45.

\* Though many social psychologists "would use the terms "drives" and "motives" interchangeably, some would like to distinguish between the two. See T. M. Newcomb : Social Psychology , pp. 80-83.

7. Kama, krodka , lobha, mo ha, mad a and matsara – passion or lust, anger, greed, temptation, conceit and jealousy are the six 'enemies' (shad-ripu) of man.

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But it is equally true that a human being cannot conduct his life without artha which constitutes the material means of living, and kdma which helps the propagation of the species. Therefore, it is needed that the correct quality and quantity, the place, and the time of artha and kdma , have to be determined and laid down by the wise sages. This is done in terms of dharma, which defines, for man, the proper quantum, place and season, for the right functioning of artha and kama. By attending to his dharma , therefore, a person is able to live a proper life even though it may be lived in terms of artha and kama. As Vidura says: "It is by the help of dharma that the sages have been able to cross the world. The stability of the universe depends upon dharma ; artha and kdma, too, depend for their proper management upon dharma. Dharma is the foremost of all; artha is said to be middling: and kdma, it is said by the wise, is the lowest of the three. Therefore, we should conduct our lives with self-control, paying major attention to dharma".\*

In the opinion of Manu, the good of humanity lies in a harmonious management or co-ordination of the three (trivarga ) , viz.,

dharmā, artha and kṛmā. Says he: "Some declare that the good of man consists in dharma, and artha; others opine that it is to be found in kṛmā and artha; some say that dharma alone will give it; while the rest assert that artha alone is the chief good of man here below (on earth). But the correct position is that the good of man consists in the harmonious co-ordination of the three".\* Now this advice, the commentator Kulluka explains, is meant for those who weigh the issue from the viewpoint of the immediate and worldly objectives of life. But, from the point of view of the final purpose and meaning of life, mokṣa alone would prove to be the best guide. 10 With reference to the supreme end of mokṣa, there-

8. Mahd. Santi. 167, 6-9 : " dharmenatvarshayas timd dharmc tokah  
pvatishfhitdk/dhmmena deva vavndkur dharmc chart hah samdhJak //?// dharmo  
rayon gunah sreshtho madhyamo kvartha uchvatc/ldnw yavivdn tU cha pravct-  
danti mantshmah //£// tasmdd dharmapradkdnena bhavttayam yatdtmana"

9. " dharmarthavuckyate sreyak kamarthau dharma eta cha /artha eveho i/Q  
sreyas trivarga iti tu sthitih /Man ii, 224.

On ' Trivargcf Kulluka comments . "dharmdrthakdmdtmckah paraspard\*  
Vtruddkas trivarga eva purushdrthatayd sreya iti v: n'schayak/

10. "evam cha bubkuksun pratyupadeso na niumuksun/mumukswum tu  
mokṣa eva sreya iti shoshlhe vaksyatel

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fore, the other three immediate objectives of life become but the means for the attainment of that end.

Now, as we shall see in our discussion of the gñhasthasrama (Ch. VI), artha and kṛmā have to be practised by the individual with reference to one or more other individuals. So also, the practice of dharma cannot be possibly conceived as existing apart from the relation between the individual and the group, – except when the dharma directed is entirely in the interest of the mokṣa of the individual, as in the case of the samnydsin (the recluse), in whose case artha and kṛmā become transformed and get merged into mokṣa. Thus, on the whole, the purushdrthas are concerned both with the individual as well as the group. They enunciate and justify the kinds of relation between the individual and the group; they define the just relations between activities of the indi-

vidual and those of the group; they also state explicitly and by implication, the improper relations between the individual and the group with a view to enabling the individual to avoid them. Thus, the purushdrthas control both the individual and the group, and also their inter-relations.

Here, it is to be remembered that when we refer to artha and kdma as purushdrthas, we refer to them in their proper proportions, that is to say, only in the best sense of these words. Artha refers to the problem and activities connected with the finding, making, gathering, conserving and organizing of the material necessities of life and all that accompanies the same. Similarly, kdma refers to the sex and the reproductive aspect, its understanding, its right functions, its obfunctioning, its organization and management both with reference to the individual and the group. As we have pointed out above, Kdma in the wider sense refers to all the innate desires and urges of man. Dharma seems to be the arbiter, the conscience keeper, the director, the interpreter, of the properties that govern the right functioning and management of the relations between the inner man and the outer man, and between the individual and the group. Dharma is, therefore, the holder of the balance in terms of which artha and kdma have to be dealt with, weighed, practised and apportioned. 11 Moksa, on the other hand,

11. For a discussion of the implications of the concept of dharma on similar lines, see also, Thoothi : " The Voishpavas of Gujaraf\ Ch. II.

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seems to be concerned mainly with the individual. It refers, perhaps, to the appeal of the inner man to the individual, unaffected by the group. It is perhaps too personal an outlook that defines the struggle and hope and justification within the individual for Moksa. But, from the Hindu's point of view, we must also remember, that the inner personality of the individual, at its best, is identified by him not only with the group, nor only with the society, nor with the nation, nor the race, nor even with the entire human race, but with the whole creation, animate and inanimate, seen and unseen, which includes all these and is still much more than all these! This will be amply evident from our discussion on the problem of moksa in the previous chapter. In the light of these considerations, the goal of moksa does not possess the narrow individual outlook, for the Hindu. Nor is it to be pursued exclusively and directly by an individual unless and until

he has duly satisfied all his social debts ( *nah* ) or obligations .\*

And now let us turn to the theory and practice of the *asramas* proper. The word *dsrama* is originally derived from the Sanskrit root *srama* 'To exert oneself'; therefore, it may mean, by derivation (i) a place where exertions are performed, and (11) the action of performing such exertions 12 Literally, an *dsrama* is a 'halting or resting place'. The word therefore signifies a halt, a stoppage, or a stage in the journey of life just for the sake of rest, in a sense, in order to prepare oneself for further journey. The *asramas* , then, are to be regarded as resting places during one's journey on the way to final liberation which is the final aim of life. The four stages of life, says Vyasa in the *Mahabhdrata* , form a ladder or flight of four steps. That flight attaches to Brahman. By ascending that flight one reaches the region of Brahma 13 Whichever of the above be the original meaning of the word, the historical development of the *dsrama* scheme as an institution and the social implications within it include all the interpretations given above. Each of the *asramas* is a stage of life in which the individual has to train himself for a certain period, and exert himself within the

\*See pp. 86-87 below.

12. Hastings : " Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics " – Art. on " *Asramd* " \*  
b f P. Deussen.

13. *Maka-Santi*. 242, 15 : *Chatushpadi hi nihireni buihmmyesha*  
*pratishthitd/ etdmarukya niksrenim brahmoioke mahiyate.*

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circuit of the same in order to qualify himself for the next.

The *asramas* are four in number: (1) the *bhmacharya* – that of a student, (2) the *gnkastha* – that of a married man, the house-holder, (3) the *vdnprasiha* – that of retired life in the forest, after abandoning the home, preparatory to complete renouncement of worldly relations, and (4) the *samnydsa* – the life of complete renunciation of worldly relations and attachments.

Attempts have been made to show that in the beginning there were only three *asramas* , that originally the *vanaprastha* and the *samnydsa* *asramas* formed only one order, and that these came to be distinguished from one another in later times. 14 Thus the *Chhandogya Upanishad* mentions three orders of life according to



dharma ( trayo aharmaskandka) : (1) the householder's order,

where one is expected to perform sacrifices (yajnah) & study ( adhyayanam ) and charity ( danam ) ; (2) the order of the recluse, wherein one is expected to perform penances ( tapas ) ; and (3) the order of a perpetual or life-long ( atyantam ) student residing permanently in the house of a teacher (dchdrya-kula-vdsi) . All these three ( sarva etc) reach the worlds of bliss ( punyaloka ) after death; but any of these three who is established in Brahman ( brahma - samstho) 15 attains immortality (amritatvam) 16 Dr. Modi also

14. See "Ptoc. and Trans, of the Seventh All Indi , On. Conf." Baroda. Dec. 1933 (1935) pp. 315-16, Art. on " Development of the system of Asramas" by Dr. P. M. Modi. See also "Vedic Index " by Macdonell and Keith, Vol. I, pp. 68-69 ; and C. V. Vaidya : " History of Sanskrit Literature Vol. I. Section ii, pp. 180. ff., Poona (1930).

15. "trayo dkarmaskandkd, yajno' dhyayanam ddnamiti prathamah , tapa eva dwiiyo, acharyakidavdsi tritriyo, atyantamdtmdnamdchdryakule > vasddayanj sarva etc punyaloka ohavanti brahmasamstho' mritatvameti/J Chhandos . XJpa ii 23, 1.

16. See Modi : op cit .

This passage, however, may be interpreted in a different manner. For, Dr. Modi has taken the word l brakmasamsthati as an adjective qualifying the three orders mentioned previously in the passage. The word, on the other hand, may have been used independently to denote an order by itself. It is in this manner that Prof. Ranade has interpreted the last sentence from the passage quoted above as referring to the samnyasa dsrama as the fourth asrama . 'We are told', says he, "that he alone who lives in Brahman ( brohmosamstho ) – referring probably to the life of the somnyasm.– attains to immortality. When we re-arrange these orders", he further adds, 'we find that the foundations of the future dsrama system are already to be found firmly

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refers to two other passages from Manusmriti where a positive assertion that the scheme of dsramas consists of three dsramas is made 17

Now, even though in early literature we find, as in the Chhdn-dogya Upanishad quoted above, a mention of the three phases of life viz , the student, the householder, and the hermit, yet it was not enjoined that these must be followed compulsorily one after the

other. A man, it seems, could become a householder after he finished his student's life, or he could live the life both of a student and a householder together, or he could turn to the hermit's life after he finishes his student's career, without marrying 18 This means that the samnydsi's stage need not necessarily be preceded by the gnkasta phase The four stages comes to us in sequential form from later Upanishads like the Jdbdla , accordmg to which the order of the student must precede that of the householder, and that of the householder must be followed by the order of the hermit (vnaprastha) , while the order of the wandering or begging ascetic (parivrdjaka or bhiksu) must be preceded by those of the householder and the hermit 19

In trying to identify the three dsramas mentioned in the Chhandogya Upanishad with the four traditional ones, one can say that a system of three dsramas rather than four could find justifi-

laid even in such an old Upanishad like the Chhandogya" – « U A Constructive Survey of Upanishadk Philosophy', (Poona, 1926), pp. 60-61.

17. "tc ev a hi trayo lokds to eva trayo dsramdh/ta evo hi trayo vedds to evoktas trayo-' gnayah" – -Man \* ii, 230 : – "There are three Worlds, three" Asmas, three Vedas, a3 also there are said to be three Fires M

And, "Yasmdt trayo' py as ram mo pidnendnnena ckdnvaham/ gnasthenaiva dhdryante tasmdjjyeshthdsramo gnhi/hla.n m, 78 ,

Dr. Modi considers that in the latter verse, the force of 'apt is intended to include all the dsramas in existence; and therefore, for him, the passage means that all the three dsramas including the gnasthdsramn itself are dependent upon grihasthasrama. The commentator Kulluka on Manu, however, has interpreted trayo, pyasrammo' as "the three dsramas other than the grihasthdiramd\* (fp-hasthavyatinktds trayo pyasrambyo ) ; these depend upon gnasthdsrama for their support.

18. See Chhdnd. Up. ii. 23. 1 (already quoted above) ; v. 10; viii, 15: Br. Lp. iii, 8 10, iv, 2, 22, Taitt - Up i, II, cf Ranade \* " A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy ", pp. 60-61; Keith; Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and the Upanishads" , volT ii. p. 587.

19. 'Keith. Op. cit. pp. 587-8. See Jdbdla. Up. iv.

to which the samnyasa state was not regarded as an asrama proper; it was rather considered as outside the meaning, and therefore beyond the limits, of an asrama as in the Svetasvatara Upanishad, wherein the samnyasi is said to be above all the asramas ( atydsra - mm) 20 ; as such, he is no longer a "social personality"; he is devoid of any family bond; he is a homeless wanderer, begging, without any belongings or property of his own; and such a one bears the name of sam-nydsin, that is, a person who has made complete (sam) renunciation ( nydsa ) of everything. 21 And, we may also point out that even in the later development of the asramas into a scheme of four stages, the personal identity of the man who ends with the vdnaprastha stage and enters into the samnyasa stage ceases to exist altogether both for himself and for the rest of the world in a formal way too. In fact, such a person is actually supposed to have been dead, the usual death ceremonies ( antyeshti ) being actually performed by his kinsmen; and the samnyasin is said to have been born out of the ashes and the flames of the funeral pyre of the dead person. Such a person, in fact, even abandons his personal name and the family surname by which he was known before he took up samnyasa , and actually adopts a new name by which he comes to be known thereafter. And, since the man is supposed to be dead, and his body is taken to have been already burnt away and the death ceremonies performed, his actual death after the sam-nydsa is accepted by him has to be by the special rites of what is known as samadhi , and not by the antyeshti death rites meant for the ordinary man.

Now, according to the Hindu Dharma-Sastra, each individual should normally pass through these four phases of life, one after the other, ( kramasah ), and live in them in accordance with the sdstras if he desires to obtain salvation ( moksa ). 22 After passing from asrama to asrama , and after offering the sacrifices with senses under control (jitendriyah) , comprehending and realizing the limitations and futility of a life dependent upon alms and offerings (bhiksdbaliparijrdntah) , if one goes forth as a wandering mendi-

20. Svet. Up. vi, 2.

21 Keith : Op. cit p. 569.

22. Mm. VX 88; also see Gcu. iii, 1; Apa. H, 21, 2.

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cant ( panvrajan ) and dies thereafter, he becomes blessed; that is, as explained by Kullukabhatta, such a person attains moksa <sup>25</sup> However, before entering the last phase viz , the samnyasa , he has to pass through the three previous phases of life in their proper order; besides, he has to satisfy himself that he has earned out the duties and obligations laid down for each of the asramas ; and he has also to see that he has duly given his dues in connection with the social obligations or the three “debts” (rinas) <sup>24</sup> These three rinas are. (1) the debt to the rishis ( rishi-rina ) , (2) the debt to the ancestors (pitn-rina) , and (3) the debt to the Gods (deva-rina) <sup>25</sup> Now these three debts could be vicariously satisfied, respectively, (1) by studying the Vedas in accordance with the rules laid down for the study (vidhivad) , that is to say, by passing through the brahmacharyasrama, (2) by begetting sons in accordance with the dharma ( dharma ) , i.e. by going through the gnyasrthasrama, and (3) by offering sacrifices according to one’s capacity ( saktitah ) , i.e. by performing the duties of the vnaprasthasrama , <sup>26</sup> After carrying out these duties in the first three dJramas , one should apply one’s mind exclusively towards the attainment of moksa <sup>27</sup> It is opined that the man who fails to carry out any of these obligations due to him during the first three asramas is not entitled even to try to attain moksa; and Manu says that he who seeks moksa without fulfilling his duties in the first three asramas will sink low to damnation (vrajatyadhah) <sup>28</sup>

There are differences of opinion among different authorities concerned as regards the particular age at which one is expected to enter each of the asramas , and the period of life he is expected to spend in it. Different ages at which a man is expected to enter the grihasrthasrama have been prescribed by different authorities; and, moreover, for different varnas , again, different ages at which

<sup>23</sup> Man vi, 34, and Kullukabhatta’s commentary on it, ( moksadbhdd - brahmabhutarddhyatitayam prdnoti). cf also Ban ii, 17, 15-17

<sup>24</sup> Man. vi, 35 cf. Ydj. iii, 57.

<sup>25</sup> Man iv, 257.

<sup>26</sup> Man vi, 36.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> “ Anadhitya dvijo vedan anutpadya tatka sutdn/anishtvd chcnva yaj -

naischa moksam tchchhan vrajatyadhah” /and also “ Rrnani tfinyapdkntya mano mokie mvesayet/anapdkrttya moksam tu sevamano vrajatyadhah ” Man vi, 35 and 37. cf. also Ydj • iii, 56; Ban . ii, 34, Apa. ii, 24

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an individual may enter the brahmacharya stage i e. the first dsrama > of education and studies, are given . 20 After the prescribed course of education is completed, the young man enters the grihas- thdsrama; this is bound to be obviously in the maturity of youth, when he has completed all the requirements of brahmachary- dsrama, and is fit to marry. And, he is expected to retire from the grihasthdsrama after playing his part as a member of the dsrama in the proper manner ( vidhivat ) ; 30 this happens when his skin gets wrinkled, when his hair turns white, and when he sees the sons of his sons; he has now to take to a life in the forest; he may leave his wife to the care of his sons, or he may take her away alongside with him . 31 In the forest he has- to live the sim- plest life: receiving alms, performing sacrifices, and studying the Vedas and the Upanishads 32 After having thus spent the third part of (a man's natural term of) life in the forest, he may live as an ascetic during the fourth part of his existence, abandoning all attachment to worldly objects and relations ( tyaktvd sangam ) zz The Kdma-Sutras of Vatsyayana point out, in this connection, that as the natural span of the life of a human being is supposed to be a hundred years ( satayaur vai purushah ) , one should divide this period into childhood (balya), youth ( yauvana ) and old "age (sthdvira). In childhood, the individual should acquire education (vidya-grahana) ; in youth he should seek to satisfy his natural craving for enjoyment and pleasure (kamam); while in his old age he should seek dharma and mo/cia . 34 But, Vatsyayana adds, that owing to the uncertainty of life ( anityatva ), one should follow these viz., vidya, kdma, dharma and moksa as they come to him at any period of life ( yathopapadam seveta ) ; 35 this is to say, one has to pursue each of these, not to the exclusion of the rest, but whenever he gets opportunities to practise any of these, he should properly avail himself of the same, in whatever dsrama he may be According to Vatsyayana, in fact, one should pursue all the three

29. See next chapter.

30. See chapters V and VI.

31. Man. vi, 1-3; also Mahd. Sdnti. 244, 4.

32. Man. vi 5 ff; Ydj ; iii, 45, Vis. xdv. 1-3.

33. Man. vi, 33

34. Kama , i, ii, 1-6.

35. Ibid.

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purushdrthas (tnvarga) viz. dharma , artha , and kdma, together in proper adjustment with each other, without any one of these coming in the way of the other . 36 This is also the tone in which Manu has advised that Uie real good of man consists m the harmony or aggregate of the three purushdrthas (tnvarga) 31 .

Of the four asramas , the first two will be treated here only m brief, as they will be described m details m the chapters that follow ; 38 on the other hand, we propose to discuss the vdnaprastha and the samnydsa asramas rather more fully in this chapter, so as to give us an idea of the kind of discipline and training which the individual is expected to undergo in these asramas

The upanayana ceremony mtroduces the young boy into the Brahmacharydsrama , 30 After the course of studies is over m accordance with the dharmas laid down for the brahmachdri, he takes a bath, symbolic of his completion of that dsrama course; so he now becomes a sndtaka i.e. (one who has taken the bath) 40 He now becomes fit to enter the next dsrama viz., the grihasthasrama . The ceremony of returning back home from the teacher is called samdvartana. In the grihasthasrama > the individual has to fulfil his obligations (rinas) to the members of his family, to his deceased ancestors, to strangers and to gods, in order to become fit to enter the next dsrama of vdnaprastha.

Now, in the vdnaprasahdsrama, as the name itself suggests the individual has to leave the shelter not only of the family ( kula ) and of the home ( gnha ), but of the village (grama) too; he must go to the forest (van a) and live there, all the while striving to bring under control his senses of enjoyment (niyatendriyah) 41 in the following manner: He has to eat vegetables and fruits only; 4 \*

36. " Anyonydnubaddham parasparasyanupady dttakam seveta ”

37. Man. li, 224.

38. For << Brahmacharydsfama\ see Ch, IV, tnfra, and for grihasthasranux see chs. V and VI infra.

39. See San, Gt Sit II, i ff; Gobh. Gr. Su. II, ,10 ff, Ap. Gr Sit . IV, 10, 1 etc.: Asv. Gr, Su I, 20, 11, ff; etc.

40. San. Gr. Su III, 1 ff; Gobh. Gr. Su, 111, 4, 7 ff. Ap. Gr. Sit, V, 12-13. A\$ v. Gr, Su. Ill, 8, 9, etc

41. Mem. vi, 4; also Ydj iii, 45; Gm. Hi, 27

42. Man. vi, 5; also Yaj. iii, 46

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he is not to touch sweet things or meat , 43 he must never accept fruits or roots grown in the village even when he is extremely hungry (arto\* pi ). 44 For his clothmg he has to use the deerskin or the bark of a tree . 45 He should make no deliberate attempts to obtam comforts; and, he has to lead a celibate life, sleeping on the floor, residing under a tree, without any attachment to where he happens to reside . 46 Yet, he has to continue the performance of the five great sacrifices ( maha-ya)na ) which he used to perform in the gnasthdsrama 3 in the proper manner , 47 and has to offer to the fullest for sacrifices; and out of whatever he collects for eating, he has to offer to the guests who may visit him, according to his might . 48 Besides, he should utilize his time in studying the Upanishads and the Srutis, and practise penances ( tapas ) for the purging of his body, as also in order to elevate his soul up to higher and higher levels 49 Thus, he must devote himself heart and soul to his studies and meditation; 'at the same time, he has to lead a life of self-control and friendliness and charity to others – a life wherein though he never accepts charity from others ( nityam anadata ), he bears a compassionate attitude towards all creatures (sarvabhutanukampakah) . 50 If the individual dies while he is pursuing his life in the vdnaprasthasrama in this manner, he is expected to reach the region of brahma 51 – that is, he attains moksa, as the commentator Kullukabhatta, on Manu-Smriti / 2 explains.

But if he survives the vdnaprasthasrama the individual has to enter the last dsrama of samnyasa, casting off all attachment (samgam) with the world . 54 Manu also permits the individual to

43. Matt, vi, 14.

44. Man. vi, 16; cf. Yaj. iii, 46.

45. Man. vi, 6.

46. Man. vi, 26; Yaj. iii, 51 and 54

47. Man, vi, 5.

48. Man. vi, 7.

49\* Man. vi, 29-30.

50. Man vi, 8. cf. Yaj. iii, 48.

51. Mem. vi, 32.

52. On Man. vi, 32; M&ksamapnoti ityarthah.

53. "Yasya tu maranabhavastasyaha" says Kulluka, before starting to comment on the next section on Samnyasa.

54. Man. vi, 33.

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enter this asrama immediately after the gnhasthasrama , 55 Commenting on this sloka of Manu, Kullukabhattacharya quotes from Jdbd-la Sruti: "One should complete brahmacharya and enter gmhastha's order, after that he should enter vdnaprastha , and thence he should take to samnyasa : or else, he may take to samnydsa directly after brahmacharya , or after the grihastha stage is completed ." 56 Yajnavalkya, too, takes the same view by allowing a person to take up the samnydsdlrama either after the vdnaprasthdsrama y or directly after he has done with the gnhasthdsrama: 57 The man who has entered the samnydsdrama should possess nothing; he must always move about all alone without being dependent upon any one for help or support ; 58 he could beg alms only once in a day; and he should not feel dispirited when he fails to procure alms nor should he feel elated when he is able to procure it . 59 Indeed, he should care neither for living nor death . 60 By restraining his senses, by casting away the love and hatred within himself, and by living a life of harmlessness to living beings, the samnydsi becomes fit to achieve immortality – that is, as Kulluka explains, to attain mofcfa . 61 All the sins of the man who passes through the samnydsdrama in this manner are washed off and destroyed , 62 and thus he attains the ultimate end or goal of existence ( paramam gatim ) – which end is again explained by Kulluka as the same a^ "moksa ,>63 The Mahdhhdrata describes the duties and obligations of the dsramas in almost similar terms . 64 And Kautilya too, summarizes

55 " Atmanyagmn scnnaropya brdmanah pravrajed grihdt' y –Man vi 38



56. Yatha J dbalasrutih- Brahmacharyam samapya grihi bhaved, grihl bhutvd t am bhaved, vani bhutvd pravrajat, ttarathd brahmacharyddeva pravrajed , gnhddva, vanadvd '

57. Yd j iii, 56, also in Bau . n, 17, 18-28; Vt s. xcvi, 1-2 Vrnanesvara's commentary on Yd), iri, 56 quotes the same passage from Jdbdlasruti which is quoted? above

58. Man. vi, 57.

39 Man. vi, 57

6& Man. vi, 45

61. Man. vi, 60; Kulluka f s commentary is " moksayogo bharati' 1

62. Man vi, 85

63. Man. vi, 96, Kulluka's commentary is "parctmdm gatim maksalaksmdm prdpnoti "

64. See Mahd. Santi. Adkydyas 61 (11 to 17 sfokas ); 191-192; 241 245, 268-275; 353-355, Anu 141 (where the Great God f Makes vara] is said to have explained to his consort Umd the duties of the four dsramas)

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them in his Artha-Sdstra in a like manner . 65 Kautilya further adds that it is the duty of the King to see that his subjects abide by the rules made obligatory for persons following each of the four dhramas. He asserts that the violation of the codes of behaviour for the dhramas as well as for the va mas would lead to a confusion of the varnas and asramas and thence to a chaotic state of the society ( samkara ) – such that the world ( lokah ) would thereby come to an end . 66 On the other hand, he adds, if all people follow these regulations, the world would certainly progress . 67 The dsrama and the varna schemes are thus conceived as means not merely towards furthering the best ends of social organization, stability and equipoise, but also of social progress.

Apart from the special duties concerned with the life of the individual in each of the dframmas, there are certain obligations of a general or universal nature; these are considered as part of the duties of every human being without reference to the dJrama to which he belongs. Thus, according to\* the Smritis, to whatever

ah-ama a man may belong, he should with diligence and assiduity (prayatnatah) practice the following ten characteristic features of a proper life of dharma Steadiness, forgiveness, self-control, abstention from appropriating anything belonging to others, purity, control of the sense organs, correct discernment, knowledge, truthfulness, and absence from anger. 6 \* Kautilya, too, has said that harmlessness, truthfulness, purity, absence of spite, abstinence from cruelty and forgiveness are the duties common to all human beings . 70

65, Art ha p. 7 (Sama&astory's Tr.)

66 "Sv ad harmassvargdydnantydy cha/tasyatikrame lokassamkaraduchch - hidyeta/tasmatsvadharmam bhutanam raja na vyabhichdrayet/svadharmam samdadhano hi pretya chcha cha nandati fj" Artha. I, in. 8, 6-7, Samasastry's Tr., Op. cit p. 7.

67. Vy avast h i tdry amaryadah kritavarndsramasthitih/ trayyd hi rak&tto

lokah prasidati na sidati// ,, ibid.

68. Man. vi, 91.

69. \*\* Dhritih ksama damo'steyam saucham indriyanigrahaah/dKirvidyd satyam akrodhho dasakam dharmalakshanam Similarly, Yaj. iii, 66 : – Satyam asteyam akrodho rhth saucham dhtr dhritir damak/samyatcndriyatd vidyd dhar - mah sarva udahritah'\ cf . also Vas x. 30.

70. Sarvesham ahimsa satyam saucham anasuya misamsyam ksama cha i Artha. I, iii, 8, 4.

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Of all the dsramas , however, the grihasthdsrama is given a very high place of honour. The Mahdbhdrata is quite emphatic m this connection. Thus we are told in the Santiparva, that once Yudhishtira became so disgusted with the ways and affairs of the world that he proposed to take to the samnydsi mode of life; but eventually he was persuaded to remain m the grihasthdsrama by the wise counsels of his brothers, wife, and the wise Dvaipayana Vyasa himself . 71 The story was narrated to him of how "certain little-witted, well-born Brahmana youths, before attaining manhood, forsook their homes and came to the woods for leading a forest life ." 72 Indra felt pity for them, and taught them that "Asceticism

is attainable by leading the life of a householder ( kutumba-vidhmd ) upon which the proper management of everything depends (yasmin sarvam pratishtitam) , 73 In fact, says Indra, “the life of a householder itself only ( ayam eva) is very superior and sacred, and gives scope for fulfilment (of life’s mission) .” 74 We are told that on hearing these beneficial words full of dharma y those “ascetics” abandoned the idea of Renunciation saying – ‘This is not meant for us now/ – and started living like householders . 75 After all his relatives did their utmost to dissuade Yudhishtira from taking up samnyasa, the Dvaipayana Vyasa himself advised him to follow the counsel of his brothers and wife of not abandoning his post as a member of the grihasthsrama. For, in the opinion of that sage, the highest dharma , as sanctioned by the sdstras, consists in a training through the duties and living the full life of a householder . 76 The householder is the support of birds, animals and various other creatures ; 77 “he, therefore, who belongs to that mode of life, is superior to all .” 78 In this dsrama, moreover, can the three purusharthas ,

71. Mahd, Santi. Adhydycts 11 ff. The explanatory title of adhyeya 11 is :

Yudhistkiram prati gdrhasthyasya sreshthyopapadanam ”, i.e.: “Exposition of the superiority of Giihasthsrama to Yudhisthira.”

72. Make . Sdnti, 11, 2.

73. ibid. 11, 21.

74. ibid , 11, 15. “ Siddhiksetram idem punyam ayam evdSramo mahdn/”

75. ibid . 11, 27. “ Tataste tadvachah srutva dharmdrtha-sahitam hitam/ utsrujya ' ndsti it i\* gata gar hast hyam samupdsritdh”

76. Mahd. Santi. 23. 2 “^dstradrishtah paro dkarmah sthito gdrhasthyam tifritah”

77. ibid. 23, 5.

78. ibid. 23. 5 “ Grikasthenaiva dhdryante tasmdehekkreshtho giihasromT.

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dharma , artha and kdma , exist together and can be used towards the end of moksa . 70 In fact this mode of life is considered as the very basis of all the others . 80 The other three dramas “derive

from this asrama the means they live upon, the offerings they make to the departed manes and the gods, and, in short, their entire support /' 81 All the obligations of life, the individual and social, all the three 'debts' (rt?zas) – the debt to the gods (dev a-rina ), the debt to the manes or ancestors (pitri-rina) and the debt to the sages (rishi-rina) – could be satisfied by a person living a full life m the gnasthdsrama 82 So also, the trust vested in us by the Creator could be executed in this asrama by the proper begetting of offsprings in the family 88

And the Smritis, too, bestow the highest praise upon the grihas-th-asrama. Just as all living creatures subsist by receiving support from air, so all the asramas subsist by receiving support from the gnastha ; and since men in the three other asramas are daily supported by the householder with sacred knowledge and food, the householder's is the leading asrama . 84 As rivers, , great and small, find a resting place in the ocean, even so men of all asramas gather their stability and support at the hands of the householder . 85 "And, in accordance with the precepts of the Veda and the Smriti, the householder is declared to be superior (beshta) to all of them; for he supports the three ." 86 He who desires imperishable bliss in heaven and permanent happiness here, must strive through this Asrama with great care and effort;

79. Maha Scbiti. 191, 10: " Dharmdrthahdmdvdptirhyatra "

80. ibid 191. 10: "Taddhi sarvdsramcmam mulam uddharanti !'

81. ibid. 191. 10: " Teshaniapyata eva bhiksd-bali-samvibhagah pramr tante"

82. ibid. 191, 13. "Apt chatra yajnakriydbhir dewt&h priyante, nivapena pitaro, vidydbhydsasre^emadhdret^ena rishayah, apatyotpadanena prajdpatir Ui'V

83. ibid.

84. Men. iii: "Yathd vdyum samsritya v&rtante sarvajantavah/ tatkd grv hastham asritya variant e sarva dsramah/JY 'asmat trayo ' pydsr amino jndnenan • nena chdnvakamjgrihasthermva dh dry ante tasmdjjyeshtdsramo grihi//” 78.

85. Man. vi 90\* "Y at ha nodi nadah serve sugar am ydnti samsthitim/tal hai~ vdsrammah serve grihasthe ydnti samsthatim”/

86. Man. vi. 89: "Sarveshdmapi chaitheshdm vedas mritivid hdnatah/ grikast ha uchyate keshtkah sa tnnnetmbibkarti h?V/

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for it is difficult to be practised by men with weak faculties . 87

Now, this special eulogy bestowed upon the grihasthsrama should not be misunderstood; we must try to comprehend its meaning in its proper perspective. The gnhastksrama is glorified, not in terms of absolute superiority of the dsrama over all the others, but from a particular angle of vision and with reference to the particular position which that dsrama occupies in the scheme of life. The Sdstrakdra's praise for the gnhastha as the best dsrama emanates, we must not fail to notice, from the point of view of the "social values" of the dsramas. Otherwise, in general, since each dsrama is regarded as an essential stage for the development of the individual, it is the best in its own place, and any comparison of merits between them on absolute grounds would be surely beside the point. But, from the point of view of a particular aspect, viz. the aspect of social valuation, the gnhastha is exalted on the grounds of its lending support to the other three dsramas, the scope it affords for the practice and cultivation of all the three purushdrthas, viz., dharma, artha and kdrna, as well as of its direct contact with the society and the consequent direct contributions made by it to the society. On the other hand, from the point of view of the acquisition of knowledge by the individual, the brahmacharydharma would evoke the highest praise; while from the point of view of individual salvation, the samnydsdsrama would take the place of honour.

It is quite possible to maintain, on the other hand, on the strength of the foregoing high compliments paid to the grihasthsrama, that of all values, social values were regarded as of supreme importance by Hindu Sastrakaras, the Hindu writers on social life like the Smriti-writers and the Epic-writers. This interpretation is further confirmed by one or two statements already quoted above, which specifically compare the grihasthsrama with the next two dsramas by asserting that in this dsrama could be achieved the merits that are achievable in the other two dsramas too! Thus, it is said that in the grihasthsrama alone can the three purushdrthas be practised together, and the three rinās could all be discharged satisfactorily. May we say that such a view of the grihas-

87. Man iii. 79: "Sa samdhdryah prayatnena svargam aksayam tckck&td/sukham chehechkatd mtymt yo'dkdryo durbaUrttdriyaih t// v .

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thdhama was due to the fact that the Hindu Sdstrakdras perhaps found that it was, in practice, not always possible, or was exceedingly difficult, for the average individual to follow the course of all the four dsramas one after the other, considering the actual average life-span of man, – which would be in most cases much less than one hundred years, – and that therefore, they wisely suggested that one can hope for salvation even if he continued in the gnhasthdsrama till the end of his life, provided that he discharged in that aJrama the three nnas and practised the three purushdrthas in the manner prescribed?

In the light of our description of the theory and practice of the dsramas given above, let us try to find out the significance and position of the purushdrthas as envisaged in the dsrama – scheme: In the brahmacharydsrama, dharma is the predominating purushartha; dharma has to be learnt up in all its aspects and ramifications; and it has to be practised particularly as a check upon kdma and artha, because these latter two are far from the objectives of the young trainee; besides, the ultimate value of moksa has to be learnt during this dsrama .

In the grihasthdfurma, both artha , and kdma become the fields of the personality of the individual who has already acquired a knowledge and practice of dharma , and who has studied the value and place of moksa for his own self-realisation. Here, let it be admitted that kdma and artha are part of the essential heritage of both the human individual and races. In this sense, artha , and kdma form what may be called part of the natural, physical and psycho-physiological apparatus for the functioning of both the group and the individual. We must observe, however, that this apparatus may be, and as a natural history of facts, has been and is being misused and misfunctioned by individuals and races. Now instead of demanding a total repression of this apparatus by damning them as merely base and worthless, the Hindu seers have taught that artha and kdma shall, on the one hand, be wisely directed into proper life-functions, as prescribed by dharma , and shall, on the other hand, be controlled from misfunctioning or disfunctioning as prescribed and proscribed also by dharma . In this way, artha and kdma have been so placed in the dhama scheme, each in terms of dharma, that both of them may, by right functioning, contribute their necessary quota for the upkeep, stability, growth

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and development of the human race consistent with the personality of each of the individuals whose conscious self-control and self-direction carry the seeds of the race and its cultural heritage through history.

Thereafter, in the vdnaprasthdsrama, dharma and moksha become the main concern of life, dharma occupying the primary position. And, in the samnyasdsrama, moksha occupies the supreme position in the samnyasi's mind; in fact, his dharma now becomes identified with moksha. Of course, throughout the dsrama scheme and throughout life in every and any phase, moksha always lurks as the ultimate aim, permeating sometimes explicitly, sometimes implicitly, underneath and defining the course of the other three viz. dharma, artha and kama also.

Like the tradition of dharma (dharma-parampara) the tradition of yajna (yajna-parampara) also persists and permeates through the Hindu scheme of life, through the asramas. In terms of yajna, all the four asramas must be considered as four kinds of yajna. The nature, practices and the forms of the yajna in each of the asramas are obvious. It is, in fact, a part of the theory of the asramas; as such, yajna must of necessity be the spirit that hovers over every stage of the life of a person in any of the asramas. (For the concept and implications of yajna, see ch. ii.).

Thus, in the hrishmacharya dsrama, the individual has to surrender his life of sense (indriya), mind (manas), and intellect (buddhi), that is to say, all the intellectual and emotional apparatus, – to the handling of and moulding by the adept (guru). Therefore, in this ashrama, on the one hand, a sort of a yajna of the lower self has to be practised, in the sense that the student (brahmachari) has to undergo all sorts of lessons in self-control imposed upon him by his preceptor (guru); and on the other hand, as he has also to acquire knowledge from his guru, jnana-yajna, i.e. yajna or 'sacrifice' in terms of devotion to and practice of learning has also to be increasingly practised by him.

The grihasthdsrama proves another kind of field for a life of yajna. At its best, it is, in a sense, the fully dedicated life. Here it is one's duty to practise artha and kama in terms of karmas in strict accordance with the dharmas, the meaning and value and the justification of which he has learnt in the first dsrama. He can partake of artha and kama, of the material and the physical

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pleasures available on earth, but without any feelings of covetousness, greed or lust, taking only his due share in these pleasures in strict accordance with the dharmas of this asrama. The gñhas-tha's life has also to be a continuous stream of giving (ddna) – a life of self-less service and dedication of his best and utmost for his elders, children, wife (who also is his sharer in his service to others) and other members of his family (kula), his dependents and strangers (a tithi), through his acts of fulfilling his social obligations (rinas). Here in the home, he has to bear in mind and practise the parting advice given by his guru in the preceding asrama that he has to give his dues to the mother, to the father, to the teacher and to the strangers (mdtri-devo bhava, pitri-devo bhava, achdrya-devo bhava, atithi-devo bhava). The devoted service of and for these is considered the same as the service of God. Here, therefore, a karma-yajna consistent with and in accordance with dharma has to be practised as fully as possible by the individual.

In the third asrama, the beginnings (drambha) are made for the yielding of the self for the final yajna which is expected to be performed in the last asrama. The individual now gives up his fields of artha and karma by leaving his near and dear ones, his family (kula), his village (grama), and by abandoning his belongings and possessions; he now goes out into the forest (varm, aranya), where by meditation and service of others, he trains himself up for the execution of the final yajna that awaits his soul-pouring in the samnyasasrama, the last asrama.

And, this last asrama provides the fullest opportunities for the self-expression and self-expansion of the individual in terms of the final yajna. This consists of a complete offering of the self (dtmd-huti) wherein the self, out of a will and purpose to be perfect, surrenders all that was nearest and dearest to his lower ego, in order that thereby and thereafter he may be enabled to be one with the real self, the dtmd. In both these last dsramas a kind of bhakti-yajna has to be practised in that the dedication to God is complete, the entire self of the individual having been now surrendered to God (sarvdrpana). Again, the individual becomes, in a sense, a jñanavM bhakta when he takes to samnyasa; for he has undergone the schooling and discipline from stage to stage, asrama to asrama, realizing more and more that he belonged not to this samsdra nor that this samsdra belonged to him; thus, now fully realizing the



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place and meaning of the self in the midst of samsdra he brings himself face to face with the final aim of all existence, viz., moksa. in this last dsrama.

The asramas, then, as we have already said, are regarded as Schools of life at several stages of human existence, devised and organized towards the best likelihood for the individual to attain the end of moksa, in accordance with the theory of the ultimate nature of things, or in accordance with the conception of existence and its relation to the Ultimate. During these different stages of life, the functions of the group and the individual are both different and definite with regard to each other. Thus, during the first dsrama, the function of the group is to look after the individual. On the other hand, as far as the individual is concerned, this may be said to be natural, neutral phase. In the second dsrama the individual has to look after the group; he is the trustee and manager of the social estate, of the social mores, and of the three rwas. The group here is interested in giving him and taking from him the fullest opportunities, social, economic, physical and spiritual, so that the individual may and should best satisfy these obligations. The third dsrama is, once more, a largely neutral phase from the point of view of the individual, as well as of the group. Here, on the part of the individual, efforts have to be made to yield up his responsibilities in the midst of power and pelf, and thus, by and by, to take to a life in accordance with the best lessons acquired in the brahmacharydh-ama, viz., of going into one's self and finding the truth out for oneself. The feeling of separation from the Ultimate or God begins to make itself felt at this stage. Even then, however, the individual is pledged to the young and the junior that he shall serve them, the family and the group, as a counsel occasionally advising them, rather than as a manager of their estate which position he had to undertake in the second dsrama. In this third dsrama and in the fourth, the function of the individual is to deal with the supernatural, with the life within; and the function of the group becomes gradually thinned out till in the fourth, it comes to almost nil. And in the last stage, the individual who is now completely free from any social obligation, has to help himself in the search of the self (dtma-chintana, dtma-jndna).

And the justification of such a scheme of the functions and

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interdependence of the group and the individual in the first three dsramas and their independence from each other in the fourth asrama is to be taught during the first stage of life, the brahmacharya; and the management of the whole scheme is to be organized, supported and established by the group as well as the individual in the second stage, the grihasthsrama. In the first stage, the group rears, protects and gives the best of its heritage to the individual. In the second stage, the individual yields his best and most for the efficient and harmonious functioning of group life, consistent with the dictates of his own conscience; here, the individual seeks to make the group the chief medium and instrument for the upkeep and growth of his personality. In the third stage, the individual, giving up the close attention formerly required of him to manage the affairs of group life, starts on a preliminary journey for self-search. While, in the fourth stage, the individual retires altogether from group activities and seeks to know and find and realize the self that hides within the core of his being.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF EDUCATION

IN the second chapter we attempted to study the fundamental attitude of the Hindu towards the problem of living which is at the basis of all Hindu social institutions. In the third chapter, we considered how the general framework of the social institutions was visualized and established in the theory and practice of the asramas, which is probably a unique way of considering and solving social problems, without a parallel in the whole history of social thought of the world.

In this chapter, we shall discuss the first of the four asramas, viz., the brahmacharyasrama which concerns itself with the management of education as a social institution. In this connection, we shall consider the institution as a socio-psychological phenomenon, rather than discuss the purely psycho-physiological techniques of education or training process which is generally understood to be the subject-matter of what is known as "Educational Psychology" today. Our principal concern will be to look into the social-psychological implications and outlook involved in the Hindu methods and discipline of education.

It is well recognised that the outlook and methods of education prevalent in a society have a far-reaching significance and influence upon the other social institutions of that society. It is also recognised that this significance and influence is not just one-sided, but of a mutual nature; that is to say, the system of education prevalent amongst a people influences as also is itself influenced by the society which it serves and by its mores. Education is the principle instrument, in the hands of a social group or an assemblage of social groups, by means of which it passes on and hands over to the individual (and thus to itself), the traditions, disciplines and culture it has gathered through long and continual endeavours of the race towards making the best and most of the

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gift of human life. Thus it seeks to train the individual to adjust himself to the ideas and ideals which have gathered meaning and value and respect from the best and the noblest that have made the history of the society. It is evident, therefore, that amongst all the social institutions, the system and outlook of education is of primary significance. "Conceivably a people could dispense with religion, as the U.S.S.R. has tried to do; conceivably a state might refuse to distinguish fixed forms of sexual union as marriage. But education is indispensable to any society, for without it there would be lost all the accumulated knowledge of the ages and all standards of conduct. Education is the social economy that forestalls such wastage." 1

Our main concern here, therefore, will be to study the social aspects and implications of the Hindu system of education and to discover the psychological reactions of the same on the individual and the society in relation to each other. – How far, in what respects, and with what results does the Hindu educational system affect the relations of the individual with the society in which he "lives and moves and has his being"? What are the socio-psychological foundations of this influence of education upon the individual and upon the group? – These shall be some of the issues we shall have to raise, and into which we shall have to probe. After stating the views of the Hindu sages on these points, we shall endeavour to evaluate the same.

Before starting to inquire about the problem of the Hindu education system, it would be advantageous for us if we consider some of the social principles which should generally underlie every

educational system. By 'education' is meant here what Dewey has called "formal or institutional education ." <sup>2</sup> This is a regular programme of training, as, for instance, carried out by schools and colleges to-day. For, in one sense, we are being educated every moment of our life, from birth till death. Consciously and unconsciously, we may be said to be learning every moment of our life. But it has been recognized that since the behaviour of an individual is likely to have vital reactions on the community of which he is a member, he should be given for a specific period in his

1. R. H. Lowie : Social Organization, London : Routledge, 1950, p 194 following Count's article on "Education" in the Encyc. Soc. Sc

2. Dewey. "Democracy and Education " pp. 7-11.

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early years a regular training calculated to equip him to adjust himself to and to serve the community. Students of human nature of all times have urged that some sort of a deliberate training of the individual is absolutely essential in order to enable the individual to adjust himself to the complex social environment in which he finds himself. From Plato, Aristotle and Plutarch down to Pestalozzi, Rousseau, Herbart and Spencer, in the West, all have pointed out that nature unaided by training and discipline cannot accomplish all that is demanded of an individual in this direction . <sup>3</sup> If we bear these remarks in mind, they will be sufficient to give us an idea of the social functions which an educational system is expected and actually has to serve.

In this connection Dr. Nunn observes: "Every scheme of education being, at bottom, a practical philosophy, necessarily touches life at every point. Hence any educational aims which are concrete enough to give definite guidance are correlative to ideals of life, and, as ideals of life are eternally at variance, their conflict will be reflected in educational theories ." <sup>4</sup> And yet it seems that we can formulate certain social principles which are, or must be, common to all educational systems. For, the real conflict is reflected not so much in what the aim of education should be, but in the ways and means employed in education, and in emphasizing some aspect or other of education. It is therefore not too difficult to get at a general idea of the social functions of education.

"The primary function of the educational system," as Panun-

zio has pointed out, "is to transmit a knowledge of the forms and skills society regards as indispensable to its survival and improvement. That system regularizes the knowledge-transmitting activity; inculcates the folkways and the mores; trains the young to fit into the established cultural scheme, aims to aid the individual in the development of personality and aptitudes; and sets forth the broad lines which the society believes must be followed in order to survive and improve ." 5 Along with imparting knowledge and skills, education also transmits the particular system of moral, social and

3. O'Shea : " Social Development and Education ", pp 248 ff

4. Nunn : " Education ; Its Data and First Principles ' ' p 2.

5. C. Panunzio : " Major Social Institutions /' New York, Macmillan 1939, p. 242.

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cultural values of the group, and thus undertakes the indoctrination of both the rational and the emotional elements which make up the adult individual. Education, understood primarily as the induction of the maturing individual into the life and culture of his people, is the most vital of all institutions and embraces all other institutions . 6 Understood in this sense, education "is essential to both the renewal and the growth of human society. In its absence the achievement of man would be limited by the powers and to the experiences of the individual, and what is known as culture could not develop ." 7

The chief aim of education is thus to furnish the individual with such necessary equipment for living that he may be enabled to reduce to a minimum the operation of those of his personal interests which conflict with the interests of the group or the society, so as to live in harmony with the group life and its ideals, and even to raise high and exalt the social and moral practices and codes which the group considers as conducive to the healthy and proper growth of its members. Each one of us has innate tendencies and impulses, some of which, if given unrestrained freedom and expression, might come into clash with the best interests of the society; therefore, one of the main purposes of education should be to train the individual in curbing these in the interests of the society. As Sumner has expressed it, education transfers the mores to the individual; that is, "He learns what conduct is approved or disapproved; what kind of man is admired

most; how he ought to behave in all kinds of cases; and what he ought to believe or reject .” 8 9 In this sense, education may be said to be the process par excellence to socialise the individual. Says Young, though in a slightly different context, “Unfortunately, much of our earlier educational psychology (i.e., in its modern western development) failed to recognize that all learning is essentially social.”\*\* Looked at from this point of view, the main problem of education would consist “either in repressing in some man-

6. R. H. Lowie : Social Organization, London, Routledge, 1950. p. 194, following Count's article in the “Encyclopedia of Social Sciences v .

7. Art by G. S. Count on “Education\* in the Ency, Sod. Sc., p. 403

8. Sumner : “Folkways”, p. 638.

9. K, Young “Sociology” 2nd. Ed., New York, American Book Co., 1942, p, 361. (*Italics in the original*).

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ner such of the child's native impulses as are out of alignment with contemporary social practices, or transferring these impulses into tendencies that will bring the individual into harmony with the customs, ideals and institutions of civilized society .” 10

Now, the problem of the socialisation of the individual must be understood and evaluated in its proper perspective. An individual may be said to have been socialised when, and to the extent to which, he has attained harmony with the purposes, aims and ideals of the group of which he is a member as also of humanity at large. For, we must remember that from the larger view-point we cannot possibly think of a particular limited group or tribe or clan apart from or opposed to other human groups or mankind as a whole. Particularly, if we are concerned with the most universal meaning of the aim of education as the theory, method and institution devised and planned for the proper socialisation of the individual, then, we must understand the term ‘socialisation’ in this wider sense. Of course, there is a narrower sense in terms of which socialisation would mean ‘making of a good citizen’ in the context of a particular country or province or some such thing. But this cannot form the universal aim of education; for, the ideals of citizenship may vary.

And, here we come to the distinction between aims of educa-

tion as they should be, and as they have been and are being actually conceived by the different systems of education. In many educational systems, the aims of education are formulated with reference to the satisfaction of certain ideals of a particular group at a definite period in its history. "There can be no universal aim of education if that aim is to include the assertion of any particular ideal of life, for there are as many ideals as there are persons. Educational efforts must, it would seem, be limited to securing for every one the conditions under which individuality is most completely developed – that is, to enabling him to make his original contribution to the variegated whole of human life as full and as truly characteristic as his nature permits; the form of contribution being left to the individual as something which each must, in living and by living forge out of himself," 11

10. O'Shea : op. dt. p. 249.

11. Nunn : op. cit. pp. 5-6

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This interpretation of the socialisation of the individual by means of education suggests another very important function of education which may be called the individual function of education as distinguished from its social function. This individual function consists in the development of the personality of an individual. In this sense, education should provide the necessary machinery, training and opportunity to the individual in order that the potentialities within him may be nursed and developed, even to the extent that the group may thereby grow in stature and breadth of its outlook and vision. Much has been made, by most writers on the subject, of education as the chief instrument in the operation of the process of socialisation as compared to its value in the development of personality. Thus, Ellwood remarks that "the systems of education may work under the fiction that they exist for the training and development of the individuals as such, regardless of the social life; but their real purpose must be to control the process by which individuals acquire habits; so that as adults, they will be efficient in carrying on the social life, and will co-ordinate their activities harmoniously with the group." 12 "Systems of education", the same writer observes at another place, "have not been created for the training and development of the individuals as such, but rather to fit the individuals for membership in society, that is, to control the process by which they acquire habits, so that they

shall advantageously co-ordinate their activities with those of the group .” 13 In a similar strain, Dr. Williams opines that “Education must lead to the formation of convictions for civic and political action, to the end that every citizen may become, within the limits of his capacity, an effective agent for progress .” 14 It will be evident from this that there is a growing opinion among writers on this subject that the value of education lies in its ability to direct the capacities and powers of the individual towards the proper functioning and stability of the social group to which he or she belongs . 15

12. Ellwood : “Introduction to Social Psychology”, p. 110.

13. Ellwood : “Sociology in its Psychological Aspects' p. 186.

14. Williams : “The Foundations of Social Sciences ”, p. 115.

15 See also Judd : “Psychology of Social Institutions” , Ch. XVIII; Young: “Social Psychology ”, pp. 239 ff. Williams : “Principles of Social Psychology ”, pp. 366 ff.

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It must be borne in mind, however, that education can be said to have an equally great value, if not greater, in as much as and to the extent to which it provides a means for the intellectual development of the individual as such. And this aspect of the value of education requires as much attention on the part of our educationists as the other aspect of socialisation has already received and has been receiving even to this day. True education helps the cultivation not only of character, habit and discipline of mind, but also of the intellect, the reason, and the critical and discriminating faculty. Without the development of the faculty of intelligent appreciation, discrimination and judgment, man would be no more than a tool, a machine which acts, be it for the good of the society or otherwise, without understanding how his actions are good or bad, and in what respects they are going to affect the social order. Besides, a truly educated individual is not always expected to be led blindly by the society; in fact, he may at times also lead the society. He must be able to weigh, to discriminate and to appreciate, and possess sufficient courage and personality to follow his own reason.

Any sound theory of education, we may therefore say, must not separate the intellectual faculties of the individual from his



behaviour towards the society The two react closely upon each other; and education must try to lay the foundations of individuals' social behaviour upon an appeal to his or her own powers of reasoning and intellect, and not upon the mere fact of social approval or disapproval. The appeal to the individual's reason or intellect, moreover, will receive welcome consideration or will fall short of it and be turned down under the pressure of a social bias, according as the individual's intellect has been allowed an independent development or not. It is the task of true education to help the growth of the individual's intellect by keeping it independent and uninfluenced by external prejudices and biases of any kind. Such a development of the individual on the intellectual side would enable him to judge every action or idea on his own and free from any social or other bias. This is what is most likely to result in the development of the personality of the individual members of the group. The system of education which aims at development of the individual's personality endows him at the same time with the power of rational appreciation. Such a system prevents that conservative and orthodox attitude of mind, which

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shuns the acceptance of any new ideas in the social and moral fields, and which pursues the traditional path merely because it offers the line of least or no resistance. For, such a type of education enables one to judge any idea or act on its own merits. Actions based on such educational equipment will be actions backed by intellect and reason, rather than mechanically followed by the individual.

Moreover, the development of the personality of individual members of the group will also help the growth of real social progress. Society will, under such conditions, refuse to remain satisfied by blindly following a social bias when it may be irrational to do so; it would, in fact, incessantly endeavour to break away from old biases and thus lead itself onwards and upwards towards a life based and built on a will that conforms with reason. This aspect of education, viz., of personality-development of the individual as such, therefore, is as much important as the other aspect of social harmony which has been much stressed by writers on the subject. In fact, real education has value both in so far as it develops the individual personality as well as it "socialises" the person and thus enables him to keep in harmony with the material and moral framework of the group to which he belongs. The proper ideal of education must envisage a co-ordination of these

two aims. It is our contention that such should be the true socio-psychological basis of any educational theory.

After this introductory discussion on the problem and aims of education in general, we may now proceed to study the socio-psychological bases of the Hindu educational theory, and see how the Hindus have tried to solve the problem of education.

In the Hindu home, every male child belonging to the Brahmana, Kshatriya and Vaisya varna started his educational career with the observation of certain rites and rituals grouped under the name of the upanayana ceremony. The earliest reference to this upanayana ceremony seems to be in the AtharvaAfeda, where the sun is described as a Brahmana student approaching his dchdrya 1T

16. Female education will be dealt with later in thi9 chapter.

17. Acharya is the word most often used in the Grihya-Sutras and other early literature (see e.g. Man. G.S.I.2, 10; A4v. O.S.I. 19, 1, etc.) The Smritis have used both acharya and guru to denote the teacher (see e.g. Man. ii,-69; 140; 145; 191-218; 225-226; eta Yaj. i,-15; 26; 33, 51, etc). In Man. ii, 191, for

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(tether) with firewood ( samidh ) and alms. 18 The Satapatha Bra mana describes a student named Uddalaka approaching his teacher with samidhs, and requesting him to be accepted as a brahmacharin for tuitions under him. 19 And the Bnhadaranyako - pamshad declares that such a request to the teacher by the student has to be preceded by the words ( Upaimyaham bhavantam % i.e., I am approaching you, Sir/ 20 The teacher then inquires about the name, birth and family of the student, as Satyakama Jabala was asked when he approached Gautama Handrumata. 21 All these formalities, and many others, which we shall enumerate as we proceed, had to take place with the observance of due rites ( vidhi ) , as was done by Saunaka, for instance, when he approached Angiras, to learn. 22

The Satapatha Brahmana describes some of the rites thus:  
The achdrya places his right hand upon the head of the pupil (Sishya) f thus symbolizing the imparting of the very core of his own personality to the pupil ( tena garbht bhavati ); and on the third night, such personal inner splendour (garbha) of the teacher is supposed to enter the very core of the pupil's whole being; thereafter, on being taught the Savitr1 Mantra , the pupil becomes

a true Brahmana. 23

The Grihya-Sutras and the Smritis have given elaborate descriptions of these and various other rites to be performed at the Upanayana . 24 A gridle (mekhal a) has now to be tied round the waist of the young boy to be initiated. This girdle is to be made

instance, we have both the words achdrya and guru used simultaneously to denote the same person Other words denoting a teacher are adhyapaka, upddhyaya .

18. A V., xi, 5.

19. -Sat Br. xi, 4, 1, 9. ^

20. "Upaimyham bhavantam iti vdchdha smaiva purva upayantt" – Bnh.

Up. vi, 2, 7.

21. Chhand. Up. iv, 4, 4.

22. Mtnuj. Up. i, 1, 3.

23. Sat. Br. xi, 5, 4, 12; with Sat Br. xi, 5, 4th Brahmaiia, which gives

a description of the rites of accepting a pupil by a teacher, cf San. Gr. S. ii, 1

ft.; Asv. G.S. i, 20, ft; Par. GS. ii, 2, 17 ft.; etc.

24. See Aiv. G.S. I, 19 seq ; San G S II, 1 seq. Ill, i; IV, 5. seq., Apa.

G.S. IV, 10 seq., etc. Man. ii; Yaj. 1. 14. ff etc. Some of these texts use the

word 'upanayand, but as Vijnanesvara on Yaj. i, 14 has explained this word means the same thing as \* upanayana \

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of munja grass in the case of a Brahmana, bow-stnng in the case of a Kshatnya, and woollen thread in the case of a Vaisya . 25 The boy is then to be given a staff ( danda ) – of paUsa or bilva wood for the Brahmana boy, of nyagrodha wood for the Kshatnya, and of udumbara wood for the Vaisya 26 Or, m the alternative, it is also laid down that any sort of staff may be used by a boy of any varna 27 Thereafter\* the sacrificial cord (yajnopavita) is adjusted

round his body . 28 The acharya then inquires after the name, family and other particulars of the boy, and asks him whether he is seriously desirous to undertake the vow of brahmacharya under his instructions . 29 After the student asserts his willingness to observe the brahmacharya , the acharya , “grasping down, with the span of his right hand, the student’s right shoulder, touches the part of his chest behind which his heart lies with the words: ‘May I be dear to thy inviolate heart ’.” 30 He further adds: “Under my will I take thy heart; my mind shalt thy mind follow; in my word shalt thou rejoice, with all thy heart; may Brihaspati, (the Lord of Learning), join thee to me .” 31 Then, calling the boy by his personal name, the acharya declares “Thou art the brahma-charin of kama ” 32 And then the Sdvitrī mantra is recited by the acharya to the student.

The upanayana sacrament ( samskara ) is virtually regarded as the second birth of the young boy ( kumdra ) 33 Till the upanayana is not passed through, every child is considered nature-born and, as such, as good as a Sudra; therefore, any child that had not gone through the upanayana rite did not enjoy the full rights of an

25. San. GS. : ii, I, 14-17; Asv GS. i, 19, 12, Far. GwS. li, 5, 21-23, also Man. ii. 42.

25 San G.S. ii, I, 18-30; Asv. G.S. i, 19, 13; Par. GS. ii, 5, 25-27, Ap, G.S. v, ii, 16.

27. San. GS n, I, 24; Asv. GS i, 20, I, Par. G.S. ii, 5, 28, Go G.S ii, 10, 14, Ap. G.S. v, ii, 17; etc.

28. San, G.S. ii, 2, 3. etc.,

29. San. G.S. ii, 2, 4 ff ; Par. GS. ii, 2, 17, ff; etc.

30. San. GS. ii, 3, 3, cf. Aśv. G.S. i 20, 10.

31. San. G.S. ii, 4, 1, Aśv. G.S. i, 21, 7.

32. San. G.S. ii, 1-3; Par. G.S. ii, 2, 7-10; Apa, iv, 11, 8-10, etc.

33. Apa. i, 1, I, 15; Gau. i, 8; Vis. xxxviii, 37-40; Vas. ii, 3 5; Man u T 148; 64.

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Ary a. After upanayana, he becomes a dvija, a twice-born . 34 And, indeed, he is now born a second time, as it were, – born into a new world of activities, duties, responsibilities and expectations and aspirations for all of which he has now to begin training and equipping himself.

These elaborate rituals and ceremonies, centering round the upanayana have a great social significance which is worth noting in this connection. They create an atmosphere of dignity and seriousness about the particular occasion; therefore, they serve to impress the minds of the persons or group taking part in the ceremonies with the deep significance attached to the occasion. It has been pointed out that the primitive tribes also had noted the social importance of ceremonials of which they took advantage when they initiated their young folk in the art of archery, or hunting . 35 Speaking of the elaborate ceremonials of this nature, Dr. Nunn observes: “The value of these consists not in themselves, but in what they symbolise. In brief, their biological utility lies in their power of arousing in actors and spectators, as often as they are repeated, states of feeling and emotion that are frequently of great social importance .” 36 Both of them feel the weight and importance of the particular duties and responsibilities entrusted to the initiated young; and the interest shown by the spectators is an index of the social significance of the occasion.

Regarding the age of the pupil at which he is to commence his studies, there are differences of opinion among the Hindu Sastrakaras. Some authorities, for instance lay down that the Brahmana, the Kshatriya and the Vaisya student should be initiated at the ages of eight, eleven and twelve respectively . 37 Yajñavalkya adds that the Upanayana may also be carried out at any convenient time according to the family custom (yathadhulam) . 38 But it is advised by some of these that the students who desire to

34. Eg.; Sat. B rah. xi, 5, 4 etc.

35. Nunn : “Education: its Data and First Principles ” (1935), pp 75-76

36. Nunn : op. cit.

37. San. Gr. Su. ii, 1, 1-9; Asv Gr. Su i. 19, 1-7; Par. Gr. SO ii, 5. 36-38; Go. Gr. S. ii, 10, 1-4 , also in Smritis : Man. ii. 36, Yaj. i, 14, etc.

38. Yaj. i, 14: so again Par. Gr Su. adds that upanayana may also be performed at any time according as it is considered auspicious by different families—Par. G. S. ii. 2, 1-4.

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speed up their educational attainments should start their studies a little earlier: the Brahmana in the fifth year of his age, the Kshatriya in the sixth, and the Vaisya in the eighth . 39 The authorities concerned also laid down the minimum and maximum age limits in each case by saying that the upanayana may be performed at any time between the eighth and the sixteenth years of age for the Brahmana boy, between eleventh and twenty-second for the Kshatriya boy, and between twelfth and twenty-fourth years for the Vaisya . 40 Those who do not get initiated within the age limits as mentioned above, become patita-savitrika , i.e , lose their right of learning the Savitri verse ; 41 they become vratyas, by thus losing this right; and such individuals are censured by Aryas ( arya-vigrahitah ). 42 The Sudras were not to go in for learning according to these authorities.

From the difference in the respective ages prescribed for the three different varnas, some writers have inferred that this emphasizes the supposed intellectual superiority of the Brahmana who was considered to be ready to begin the study at a younger age than his non-Brahmana fellows. But if we recall here an earlier remark, made at the beginning of this chapter, that an educational scheme touches life at every point and is a practical philosophy of life, we shall be able to see that the real explanation of this distinction should lie in another direction altogether. Of the three varnas , the Brahmana's main duties centred round teaching and learning, according to the Hindu theory of varna of which we shall have to speak in more details in a later chapter . 43 The Brahmana boy was supposed to have come of a family, the members of which adhered to their duties of teaching and learning; and therefore, it would be quite natural to expect a hereditary predisposition as well as environmental facilities for a Brahmana child to develop tendencies to learn earlier owing to his family and social surroundings than it could be for the Kshatriya and Vaisya children who

39. Man. ii, 37. cf. Ap. i, 1, 19-20; Gau, i, 6.

40 San. Gr. Su. ii, 1, 1-9 As. Gr. 90. 1, 19 4-7; Par. G.S. ii, 9, 37-38; Go. ii 10, 3-4 etc; and, Man. ii, 38, etc.

41. San. Gr. Su. ii, 1, 8; Aśv. G.S. i, 19, 8; Par. G.S. ii, 5, 39; Go. G.S. 11, 10, 5.

42. Manu. ii, 39; Yaj. i, 38.

43. See Ch. VIII.

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were born and bred up in totally different surroundings\* And, as to the Kshatnyas and Vaisyas, the age when each of these is allowed to start studies is very nearly the same, which fact goes to support the above contention. Moreover, as the Brahmana's duties of life were centred around learning and teaching the earlier he started to learn, the better it would help him to become a master of as much knowledge as possible. Besides, he had also to spend a longer period in studenthood.

With the performance of the upanayana ceremony of the boy, his first lessons in simple living and developing 'frustration tolerance', so to speak, begin, irrespective of the position or status of the family in which he is born. In all humility and with a reverential attitude the initiated pupil had to start begging alms for his teacher. The Satapatha Brahmana says of the student who is required to do this: "Having made himself humble, as it were, and having become devoid of shame he begs alms" 44 He may start begging food from his mother, sister or other female relatives who are not likely to refuse. 45 He has then to announce { nivedya } the same to the guru, and with his permission, should help himself with it. 46 The student is expressly forbidden from accepting from anybody anything but alms (bhiksha). 41

Next, there are rules about taking meals prescribed for the student. Manu says that he should take meals only twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening, and must abstain from taking a third meal between the two. 48 He has to avoid over-eating ( atibhojanam ) because it causes ill-health (anarogyam) > shortens the duration of life ( andyushyam ), prevents acquisition of the spiritual merit ( apunyam ), will not lead to heaven (asvargyam) and is condemned by men. 49 According to Hdrta also, over-eating as well as eating spoilt or stale food causes ill-health, is hostile to longevity and to the attainment of the celestial region and virtue; besides it is condemned by the society and should therefore be avoided. 50 The student should never eat flesh (wdmsam)

44. Sat. Br. xi, 3, 3, 5. (Tr. by J. Eggeling).

45. Man. ii, 50; also San. G.S. ii, 6, 4-6, Asv. G.S. i. 22, 4-7

46. San. G S. ii, 6, 7; Man. ii, 51; Yaj. i, 35

47. Vyasa. i, 32.

48 Man. ii, 56; ch. Bau. i, 8, 14.

49. Man. ii, 57. 50. Har. i, 61 (Tr. by M. N. Dutt)

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or honey ( madhu ). 51 He is also advised not to eat stale sweet . 62 He is ordered not to eat beetle leaf . 53 Says the Mahdbhdrata : "Eating morning and evening is an ordinance of the Gods. It is ordained that no one should eat anything between these periods ." 54

About the dress of the student, Manu has said that a Brahmana student shall wear a piece of hempen cloth, a Kshatnya student shall wear a piece of silken cloth, while a Vaisya one shall wear a piece of woollen cloth, just enough to cover the body. So also each of these three have to put on upper garments ( uttariya ) made of the skins of antelope, of the rum (a kind of deer), and of the goat, respectively . 55 In the opinion of Vasishtha, the Brahmana student should wear a piece of cloth dyed with madder, and the Vaisya student should wear a piece of cloth dyed with turmeric or made of raw silk . 56 Another piece of thread or threads, considered sacred (yajnopavita) , is also to be worn by the student; it is suspended from the left shoulder and comes to the bottom of the right arm, and is made up of three strings of cotton for the Brahmana student, of hempen thread for the Kshatriya, and of woollen thread for the Vaisya . 57 We must note that the higher the varna to which the student belonged, the less luxurious piece of garment in regard to its quality is to be worn by him.

The staff, which the student is to hold, should be straight, unburnt, pleasing in appearance ( saumya-darsanah ) , and not likely to create terror in any person (an-udvega-karah) ; 58 for it is intended merely as a security of the student's safety and not for deliberately offensive purposes. It is also required of the student that he should not indulge in such luxuries as anointing (anjanam) the eyes, using scents, and using umbrellas and shoes ( updnach - chhatra-dharanam) , 59 He is not to embellish or adorn his body with ointments etc. ( abhyagam ) ; nor is he to enjoy dancing ( nwr - tanam), music and playing on the instruments (gita-vadanam) , or

51. Man. ii, 177; Gaut. ii, 13; Ap. 1. 2, 2, 23



52. Man. ii, 177; Yaj. i. 32; Vis. xxiii, 11.

53. Para, i, 50.

54. Santi. 193, 10.

55. Man. ii, 41.

56. Vas. x.

57. Man. ii, 44; Vis. xxvii, 19.

58. Man. ii, 47.

59. Man, ii, 178-9; Yaj, i. 32 Gant ii.

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take part in gambling ( dyutam ), or useless gossiping ( jana-vadam ) . 60 He is to preserve his vow (vratam) of hrahmackarya; he is not to talk with women more than necessary . 61 He is to speak the truth, be modest and possessed of self-control, and keep free from lust (kdma), anger ( krodha ) and greed ( lobha). Q 2 He has also to behave without causing any harm (himsanam) to any being . 63 In short, as Gautama puts it, he has to keep his tongue, arms and stomach under control mid discipline . 64

Thus the Hindu student was being trained in the habits of simple life, no matter to what family he belonged. Williams has rightly observed that young children should be taught to think not of what they can have but of what they can do without "Then, as men and women", he proceeds, "will they be free to give themselves to high aims untempted by the material side of life /' 65 In India, whatever the social position or status of the students' families, - whether they came from rich or from poor families, - they had to take up the same mode of life. In the Mahabhdrata and the Rdmdyana , there are several instances showing how even princes had to undergo the same rigours of the student's life along with their poorest brother-students. Sri Ramachandra, the hero of the Rdmdyana , and his brothers, - all sons of the King Dasaratha, - had to undergo these hardships of the life of a student. And in the Srimad Bhdgavata, we have, for instance, the story of princes Balarama and Krishna following the hard life of the student along with their poor fellow student Sudama at the dsrama (hermitage)

of guru Sandipani of Avanti . 66 So again, in 'Raghuwamsa' we have a description of the peaceful atmosphere and the simple mode of living at the dsrama of Kula-pati (Rector, Principal) Vasishtha ; 67 we are told that King Dillpa, accompanied by Queen Sudakshina, went to the dsrama with a very small retinue of attendants, in order that there should be no disturbance to the quiet atmosphere

60. Man. ii, 177-9; Ap. i, 1, 1, 2-23 to 3-24; Gau. », 135. 16.22; Yaj. i, 32.

61. *ibid.*

62. *ibid.*

63. *ibid.*

64 Gau. ii, 22.

65. Williams : " Principles of Social Psychology ", p. 378.

66. See Bhag x, 80, 34 ff.

67. See Ragkuvamsa , Canto, i, 35-95.

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of the dsrama ; 68 and, on their arrival at the dsrama, these royal guests were provided with only the rural ( vanyam eva) means of living for the night's stay – viz. a hut made of leaves ( parna-sdld ) and beds of Jcu/a-grass . C9

The student has to rise up early in the morning before sunrise. "If the sun rises, seeing him asleep out of wilful laziness, let him mutter the gdyatri mantra and fast for a whole day ", 70 as a penalty. He is not to sleep during day time at all . 71 He should offer the sandhya prayer and rite twice daily – early in the morning and in the evening . 72 Says Bhishma in the Mahabhdrata : "The Sun-God should always be adored. One should not sleep after sunrise. Morning and evening the prayers should be offered, sitting with face turned towards the East and towards the West, respectively ." 73 The student should take his bath every day . 74 The first duty ( aditah ) of the guru , on the completion of the preliminary rites of the Upanayana of the student ( sishya ), was to instruct him in the rules of personal cleanliness ( saucham ) and of proper conduct (dcharam) . 75 The acharya says to the initiate: "You are a brah-

machari; do the service; do not sleep in daytime; with devotion to the acharya, study the Veda ." 76

One unique thing to be noted about the student's life in Hindu India was that he had to live in the premises of the hermitage ( dsrama ) of the guru . The Chhdndogya Upanishad speaks of the student as residing with the family of, or in the neighbourhood of the acharya (dchdrya-kulavdsin, ante-vdsin) 77 The term ante-vasin with reference to the student is also mentioned in the Briha - daranyaka and the Taittiriya Upanishad 78 The Smritis too pres-

68. *ibid*, i, 37.

69. *ibid*, i, 94-95.

70. *Man.* ii, 220.

71. *Ab.* i, 1, 2, 24.

72. *Man.* ii 222; *Yaj.* i, 22; 25.

73. *Santi.* 193, 8.

74. *Man.* ii, 176, etc.

75. *Man.* ii, 69; *Yaj.* i, 15.

76. Aṣv. G S. i, 22, 2: Brabmachdryasyupo' ham, karma kuru/ diva md svaPsir, debar yddhtm vedam adhishveti"/

Also cf. *Sat. Br.* xi, 5, 4, 5; *San. G.S.* ii, 4, 5.

77. *Chhand. Up.* ii, 23, 2; and iii 11, 5.

78. e<sup>^</sup>. *Brih. Up.* vi, 3, 7; *Taitt Up.* i, 11, 1.

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cribe rules for the student's residence at the guru's house. We have already referred to the story of Balarama and Krishna's education at the asrama of guru Sandlpani, and Ramchandra's and his brother's education at Viswamitra's asrama: And, there is something indeed that could be said in favour of this system of the ancient Hindus giving the boy up to the absolute care of the

teacher, during the period of his education. In the family, the young boy is likely to come in close contact with persons who may be of a less moral calibre than his parents would desire for his company. It is also probable that the boy may come in contact with environment and surroundings which would not be conducive to his free and healthy moral and mental development. Further, there are likely to be some family prejudices and beliefs whose impress upon the child at an early age may obstruct the free and proper development of his faculty of reason. Under the Hindu system, the raw material of the child was given over, for proper emotional and intellectual shaping, to the care of the expert who was particularly equipped for his special task, who was a man as well known for his learning as for his high character, and whose main duty in life was to teach and train. The young child was placed in the hands of the guru at an age when his attitude towards things and persons around him was not yet formed and fixed. At this stage, his mind is so flexible and so much likely to be influenced by those who possess authority over him that it should be the duty of the parents to place him under the care of a tried person of a high moral character. Ross has observed: "The hackneyed metaphors, 'potter's clay', 'wax tablet', 'bent twig', 'tender osier', are so many ways of emphasizing the high suggestibility of the child. The mark of the young mind is an absence of fixed habits, of stubborn volitions, of persistent ways of acting. The staunch personality that can plough through counter-suggestions as tremorless as an iron-clad in a flight of arrows we look for only in the adult. The child gradually builds it as a worm builds its wormcast—out of material taken in from without. And this original dependence on surroundings holds true alike of the martyr and of the milk-sop, of moral hero and of weakling. They differ only in their power to form fixed habits." 79

79. Ross : " Social ControV\ p. 163.

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Therefore, childhood is an age when utmost precaution has to be taken in selecting the environment in which the child is to be brought up, as well as in selecting the person under whose influence he is to be brought up. It is the formative period of life; and the process of suggestion as well as of imitation play greatest part during this period of one's life. The greater part of an individual's character is due to the various impressions his mind has received during childhood. Further, we also know how the

modern psychoanalyst often traces the cause of an adult's mental disorder to some event which has left its stamp upon his mind during his more tender years. Under the Hindu system of education, the young boy had to live with his guru, often far away from his nearest relations, so that his absolute mentor and guide was the guru alone. And, he was kept in an environment free from temptations, an environment of simplicity, of natural surroundings.

This system, again, can claim another advantage to its credit. It avoided any occasion of conflict between the teacher and the family, such as are, for instance, met with in the modern school . 80 The school-child finds itself divided between two kinds of interests, – the one is the tendency to follow the family and other attitudes he has been acquiring during the time he is spending with his family, and the other is the tendency to develop the power of independent learning . 81 This conflict of the two interests also was avoided in the Hindu system by leaving the child entirely in the custody of the acharya.

Rightly, therefore, have the Hindu sages spoken of the acharya as the "spiritual father" of the pupil . 82 The acharya in his turn was to regard the pupil with all the affection due to a son . 83 Unless the acharya took a real paternal interest in his pupil, he would not be able to wield a deep moral influence upon him; and, therefore, to that extent he would also be unable to mould his character properly. The opening prayer which both the teacher and the pupil sing together^ according to the Taittiriya Upanishad, is this: Almighty! Do protect us both, together; give food for both of us

80 See e.g., Williams\* "Principles of Social Psychology", pp. 367 ff.

81. *ibid.*

82. Ath. Veda xi, 5 3; Ait. Br. i, 1; Man. ii, 170; Gant. i. 1, 10; Vasxxviii, 38-0\* Maha. Vana. 180, 34; etc.

83. Frashna Up. v, 8; Ap. i, 2.

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at the same time; may both of us apply our energies towards acquisition of knowledge in harmony and co-operation; may our studies be illustrious and brilliant; may there never be any feeling of estrangement amongst us two! Peace! Peace! Peace!!! 84

It is highly interesting, and also instructive, to note here how the concept of vidya ('knowledge\* or 'learning\* or 'lore\* or 'science\*) gradually developed and became more and more comprehensive and inclusive as the Hindu pioneered and developed newer and newer 'lores\* or 'sciences'. To begin with, all learning, all vidya, consisted of the three vedas ( trayi , i.e. the trio) , the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, and the Sama-Veda , to which very soon the fourth Atharva-Veda was also added. Learning and scholarship, then, meant proficiency in these Vedas . As new vistas of knowledge were gradually opened up and new branches of knowledge emerged and were developed by the Hindu, the concept of vidya also became wider and wider; but still the tendency was to trace the roots and sources of the new knowledge to the Vedas , which was reflected in the Hindu's regarding the Vedas as the fountain source of all knowledge and the other newly emerging branches as their secondary and derivative offshoots. In fact, according to the tradition, the term veda also means shad-anga veda, i.e., veda with six "limbs" ( anga ) or branches, viz., Siksha (Phonetics) , Kalpa (Rules for yajna ) , Vyākaraṇa (Grammar), Nirukta (Etymology), Chhanda (Prosody), and Jyotisha (Astronomy). Therefore, when the Hindu wanted to refer to 'learning' or 'knowledge' he still referred to the Vedas, which, now by implication included the four vedas and all other available knowledge also.

However, he must have felt that this way of conceiving relationship between the new branches of learning and the Vedas was not altogether convincing or satisfactory, particularly when the new lore or branch came to achieve such great advances, development, systematization and specialization, as in the cases of Medicine (Ayurveda^ Science of the Life) and Archery (Dhanur-vidya^ Science of the Bow); and so he went to the extent of exalting these new vidyas themselves by suffixing the term, veda to them.

84. Taitt Up. ii, 1 : u Om ! sahanavavatu, sakamu bhunaktu, sahaAryam karavdvahai/te jasvinavad hit am astu ma vidviskdvahai J Oml Santik ! Santih! Santih !" The same prayer is repeated in ibid, iii, 1.

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which now came to be known as Ayur-Veda and Dhanur-Veda. In the Sanskrit literature, mention is often made, in describing the scope and extent of the field of knowledge available for the inquisitive student, of the fourteen vidyas (sciences) and sixty-four kalas (arts); and though we have no evidence that all of these

vidyas acquired the exalted designation of vedas, yet, the trend indicated in the names like Ayur-Veda and Dhanur-Veda is clear. It is necessary to bear all this in mind whenever we come across terms like Veda-paraga , proficient in the vedic lore, or learned in all the vedas; or mantravid , proficient in the mantras; and so on.

In this connection, it may also be mentioned that the term Veda is derived from vid, to know; and Jaimini, in his Purva - rrumdmsa notes that its subject-matter consists of Dharma and Brahma, which could be understood only through the Veda . 85 Again, the term Mantra is derived from manana , thinking, cogitating, and so means an instrument or vehicle of thought . 86

Traditionally, mention is often made in Sanskrit literature (including the drama, the story and the poetry) of fourteen sciences (vidyas) and sixty-four disciplines of arts and crafts (kalas); but occasionally reference is made to a larger number of sciences and arts also. Among the sciences, e.g., are mentioned the following: the three (or four) Vedas , Itihasa-purana (history), Vyakarana (Grammar) , Bhuta-vidya (demonology) , Kshatra-vidya (Military Science, Science of War) , Vakavyam (Science of Disputation, Dialectics), Tarka-sastra (Science of Reasoning or Logic), Siksha (Phonetics), Nirukta (Etymology) , Chandas (Prosody or Metrics), Nakshatra-vidya (Science of Stars or Astronomy), Jyotisha (also Science of Luminaries or Astronomy) , Rasi (-Ganitam, i.e., Arithmetic), Ekadhyaya (~Niti-sastra, i.e., Science of Ethics and Politics), and a few others also . 87 Among the arts, Vatsyayana gives a list of sixty-four (see below), and many other writers refer to or mention this number, but some also refer to a larger number . 88 In the Chhandogya Upanishad , for example, Narada tells Sanatkumara

85. Dharma – brctkmam Vedaikavedya .

86. Yask in Nirukta, vii, 3, 6.

87. See Chkmdcgya Up. vii, 1; Sat. Br. iv, 8, 9, 20; xi. 5, 6. 8; etc.

88. Kama . i, iii, 1-15; also in Sukra-Niti; Bhag. PutS. x, 45, 36; Rikna. i, 9.

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that he has studied the sciences, a list of which he mentions ; 89 most of these are referred to in the list above; and therefore, he

asserts he is truly a mantra-vid ; but yet he admits that he feels far from satisfied because he has still not learned the Science of the Soul, Atma-vidya , and therefore is not an Atma-vxd, i.e., learned in the science of the Atman (soul) . 90

The teacher's duty towards his pupil was to impart to him "truth .exactly as he knew it ".\* 1 The function of the teacher was to lead the pupil from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge . 92 The teacher from whom the pupil receives the upanayana sacrament ( samskara ) is called an acharya . 93 And Apastamba explains the word thus: "He from whom the student gathers (achinoti) his dharma is the acharya ". 94 The acharya must never get wearied of instructing his pupil, and must also, as a teacher, try to maintain a high standard in respect of his own academic attainments . 9 ' 5 The Gopatha Brahmana narrates the story of a certain teacher named Maitreya who closed his asrama and dismissed his students as soon as he discovered that he was not conversant with a particular subject; and, thereafter, he started to acquire a knowledge of that subject . 96 The acharya must not only love his pupil like his own son, but must also give full individual attention to him while teaching; and he must not withhold any part of the sacred knowledge from him: "Loving him like his own son, and full of attention, he (the teacher) shall teach him the Dharma - Sdstra, without keeping away anything from the whole dharma. And, he shall not use him for his own purposes to the detriment of his studies, except in times of distress ". 97 The Mahdhorata as well as the Ramdyana give us numerous instances of teachers of very high moral character and learning, like Viswamitra, Vasishtha, Sandipani, Dronacharya, Kripacharya and others.

On the other hand, a very high degree of reverence to the

89-90 Chhand. Up. vii, I.

91. Mtrnd. Up. i, 2-23; Prasna Up. vi, 1, Chhand. Up. vii, 16, 7.

92. Ap. i, 10, 11.

93. Gau. i, 9. Apa, i, 1, 1, 13.

94. Apa. i, 1 , 1 , 13.

95. Man. ii, 73; Sar. Gr. S. iv, 8, 12, 16-17.

96. Gop. Br. i, 1, 31.

97. Ap. i, 2, 8, 25-26.



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teacher was expected of the student. Manu-Smriti says that within the sight of his guru, the student shall not sit carelessly or at ease. 98 Again, in the presence of his teacher he was always to eat less, wear less valuable dress and ornaments, and rise earlier and go to bed later." Wherever people defame his teacher, whether justly or falsely (parivddo ninda vapi), there the student must cover his ears, or depart from that place, rather than hear it. 100 By censuring his teacher, though justly, he will become (in his next birth) an ass; by falsely defaming him he will become a dog. 101 Now, these and such other rules were not intended to create a servile attitude in the pupil towards the teacher; they were meant only to cultivate an attitude of deep reverence for the teacher in the breasts of the students. Yajnavalkya explains such rules by saying that the student should "wait upon (updsita) the guru for the sake of learning (svadhyaya). He should also be all attentive to him (samdhitah). He should always promote his guru's interest (hitam) by all acts of body, mind and speech" (7rM7w-vdk-kdyar-karma-bhih). 102

In Mahabharata we have several instances of strict obedience of the teacher's word by the pupils. The Mahabharata says: "The father and mother only create body. On the other hand, the life which one acquires from the guru is divine. . . . The gurus always treat their disciples with great affection. The latter should, therefore, revere their gurus duly. . . . The guru deserves greater respect than either the father or the mother". 103 These and such other rules were intended to infuse a spirit of high reverence in the pupil's heart towards his teacher. The reason is obvious. Unless the teacher is regarded with deep reverence as well as deep affection by the pupil, he would not succeed in carrying the psychological influence over the pupil such as is necessary for the proper mentor and the guide. Childhood, as Ross puts it, "is the hey-day of

98 Man. ii, 1%; also Gaut ii, 14-15; Ap. Gr. S. i, 2-21; Sar. Gr. Su. iv. 8, 5, 741.

99. Man. ii, 194; 198; also Gan. ii, 21; Ap. Gr. S. i, 4, 22-28\* MahS. Adi. 91.

100. Man. ii, 200

101. Man. ii, 201.

102. Yaj. i, 26-27; cf. also Man. ii, 191 'Kuryad adhyayane yatnam dchdr-yasya hiteshu cha /

103. Santa. 108-18, 21 and 24.

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personal influence ", 104 and the Hindu child was therefore placed under the influence of a "picked person" and an expert intellectual leader of a high moral standard. Such great, selfless, intellectual leaders are a rarity at any time and in any country. At any rate it would be certainly impossible to find such an intellectual leader in every family. To the sole care of one of these few great men was the student in ancient India entrusted for his moral and intellectual training. The Mahdbhardta points out that "if the guru happens to be unwise, the disciple cannot possibly behave towards him in a respectful or proper way; if the guru is possessed of purity and good conduct, the disciple also succeeds in acquiring conduct of the same kind ". 105

The moral influence of the teacher upon his pupil must have acquired an added weight due to the fact that the teacher charged no fees to the pupils or their parents for his labours. Teaching for a stipulated fee (bhridakadhyapakah) , as well as being taught for a stipulated fee (bhridakadhyapitah) , have both been severely denounced . 106 After the young student has finished his course of studies, however, he may offer a gift (guru-dakshina) to his guru , according to his own means, before he leaves the guru's house . 107 But such a gift, as the Vajasaneya Samhitd points out, does in no way signify an adequate return in exchange of the knowledge received; it is only a mark of honour and respect to the teacher . 106 There is an instance in the Mahdbharata , for example, of guru Drona being presented with gifts by Bhishma for accepting the tutorship of the Kaurava princes . 109 But such gifts to the teacher were regarded as honoraria paid to the guru , as an expression of respect for one who was very often himself a man with little or no financial possessions.

The poet Kalidasa has given a pertinent instance in this connection: Varatantu, the guru, was urged by Kautsa, the sishya, to accept some fee (guru-dakshina) from him after his course of

104. Ross, op. dt., p. 164.

105. Maha, Ann. 105, 3: "Na guravakrita-prdjne sakyam sishyena vartitum/guroT hi dirgha-darsitvam yat tachchishyasya Bhadrata/ /.

106. Man. ill, 156; cf. Yaj. i, 220, Maha. Santi 260.

107. See Man. ii, 245, Yaj. i, 51, Asv Gr. S. iii, 9, 4; Gobh Gr. S. iii, 4, 1-2 etc.

108. Vaj. Sam. xix, 30.

109. Maha. Adi. 141-44.

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studies ( vidya ) was over ( samapta ). Varatantu, however, refused to think of any payment in return for the knowledge he had imparted, for, indeed, he looked upon Kautsa's attention and devotion ( bhakti ) to him as the fee itself. But Kautsa's obstinate insistence provoked him into anger, and he demanded "four and ten crores of money, according to the number of lores" – i.e., the fourteen lores (vidyas ) – that were taught by the guru , 110 so as to indicate to Kautsa that the teacher's obligations to the pupil are unrepayable by money. This story clearly indicates that accepting fees for tuitions was regarded as immoral by the teachers of ancient India. Learning was thus never used in India as a means of earning material gains.

Free tuitions had another very important significance in the Hindu educational system. It meant that the education of the Hindu child never depended upon the financial position of the family into which he was born. The gates of the Temple of Learning were open to all, prince and pauper, alike. Nor did the quality of education suffer owing to lack of capacity to spend money over it. Education was thus not dependent nor controlled by external factors like financial beneficiaries, ruling authorities, or political systems. In fact, as we have already seen, even the Kings had to be humble when they approached an educational institution or ashrama for a visit.

Knowledge was not only never given with any material motive behind it, but it was also never acquired with such a motive. There were no material prizes offered to pupils for excellence shown in their lessons except perhaps the expression of admiration by the teacher. There were no competitive examinations marking the gradations of the students' abilities. To acquire knowledge for its own sake was the sacred duty ( dharma ) of every one; and no one went to learn with a view to furthering or increasing material prospects. Absence of any material motive in learning must have been a great psychological asset in keeping the Hindu educational system

free from many of the evils that would otherwise have beset it. For, it was the firm belief of the Hindu sages that once a material motive is let in as an end into the educational system in one way or the other, it would set into motion the interplay of a variety of

110. Raghuvamsa , Canto, v, 20-21.

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complex economic forces into the system which, along with those who taught and learnt under it, would be very adversely affected as a consequence. On the side of the teachers, there would be created a rivalry and competition amongst them to obtain as large a number of students as possible, since that would pay them more, and the efficiency in imparting education would deteriorate to that degree. On the side of the students, there would be created a rivalry and a spirit of competition amongst them also to win prizes and other material awards; and this spirit of rivalry amongst the students is most detrimental to the real cause of education. For then, learning will have value for the students only in so far as it is able to yield laurels and prizes and other gains, and will, therefore, be pursued only with the material motive in view. The temptations of material profit would be too great and too enticing to keep the pure, disinterested intellectual joy in learning alive. "Spontaneous and disinterested desire for knowledge", says Russell, "is not uncommon in the young, and might be easily aroused in many in whom it remains latent. But it is remorselessly checked by teachers who think only of examinations, diplomas and degrees ". 111 The Hindu system of education was never allowed to suffer from motives of any kind of material prospect or of a spirit of rivalry and competition; and utmost care was taken to keep alive lofty ideals in the breasts of the learners. The pursuit of knowledge was carried on as one's part of the inherent, natural duties (dharma) of man.

To achieve in learning ( vidya ) is due the highest honour, according to the Hindu, more even than to achievements in wealth (vittam) or to elderly relationship, or to age 112 Manu tells us the story of a young boy (sisuh) named Kavi who taught his elder relatives and used to call them "little sons" ( putraka ) since he excelled them in knowledge. These relatives complained to the Gods about Kavi's audacity; but the Gods gave their decision in favour of young Kavi . 113 For, a learned man, though young, has to be respected and honoured by virtue of his learning . 114 Bhishma advises that before giving a maiden in marriage, inquiry

must first be made as to the educational qualifications of the

111. Russell : "Why men Fight ", p. 174.

112. Man. ii, 136; Yaj. i, 126; Maha. Vana. 133, 11-12.

113. Man. ii, 151, 53, also in Raudh. i, 3, 47.

114. Man. ii, 156; Gaut. vi, 21. 23; Yaj. i, 115.

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suitor . 115 So again, a maiden coming from a family where the Vedas are not studied is regarded as unfit for marrying . 116 Every twice-born person (dvijanman) is by sacred duty bound to study the Vedas together with their inner essential meaning ( rahasya ); at the same time such a person must undergo the disciplines and obey the rules ( vratdh ) laid down for a brahmacharin , (that is, for one belongmg to the "order" of a student ). 117 It was well recognised that education was the foundation upon which the whole edifice of the moral culture of the individual was to be built. A person belongmg to the dvija varnas, i.e., to any of the first three varnas , who failed to do his duty of studying the Vedas would be degraded to the Sudra varna. 118 In this connection, it may be pointed out that as early as in the times of Yajur-Veda , at least, Vedic knowledge was possible to all classes including the Sudras, and even the non-Aryans . 119

There were many other matters of discipline imposed upon the Hindu student. As soon as the initiation ceremony of the student was over, the first duty of the guru was to instruct his new pupil in the rules of personal cleanliness and of good conduct . 120 The young boy must learn to befriend all living beings . 121 A striking feature of the Hindu system of education was that the training in character-building proceeded side by side with the development of the intellect of the student. The moral culture of the student was not separated from his intellectual culture. "Grateful, non-hating, intelligent, pure, healthy, non-envious, honest, energetic, – such a student should be taught, according to dharma ". 122 Indeed Manu would say that one who completely governs himself (suyantrita) , though he knows the Savitri mantra only, is better than he who

115. Mate. Ann. 44, 3.

116. Man. iii, 7; Yaj. i, 54. See Ch. on 'Mamagd below.

117. Man. ii, 165.

118. Man. ii, 168; Vis. xxviii, 36; Vas. iii, 2.

119. Yajur. xxvi. 2: Yathemam vdcham kalyantmavadam , janebhyah brahmana-Tdjanydbhydm sudrdya chdndrydya cha svdya chdranaya. ( svdya = of one's own (group) ; charana = Vaisya, rdjcnya = Kshatriya).

120. Aṣv. Gr. i, 22, 2; Man. ii, 69; Yaj. i, 15.

121. Man. ii, 87, Vas. xxvi 11.

122. Yaj. i, 28; "KritajntfdTohi medhdm suchih kidyo'anasuyakah/adhydp-ya sddhu&ktdptasvdrthadd dhcrmatastvime//

Also, cf Man. ii, 109.

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knows all the Vedas but who cannot control himself . 123 No amount of knowledge can help one whose heart is contaminated with evil ideas (vipradush/a-bhava) . 124 On the other hand, he whose speech and thought are pure and ever perfectly guarded, gains the full benefit which is attainable by the study of the Vedas . 125 "The wise man", says Manu, "should strive towards controlling ( samyama ) his organs ( mdnya ) which run wild among alluring sensual objects ( vishya ), just as a charioteer controls his horses . 126 The organs are: the five faculties of sense (buddJundriyani) , viz., the ear, skin, the eye, the tongue and the nose; the five organs of action ( karmendriyani ) – viz., the anus, the organ of generation, hands, feet and the organ of speech; and the eleventh– the mind, which is both an organ of sense as well as of action. When the mind (manas) is controlled (jita), all other organs are controlled . 127 For Manu, man incurs guilt undoubtedly (asamJayam) through the attachment of his organs to sensual pleasures. But he is sure to attain the aim of his life ( siddhim ) if he keeps these under complete control (samyama) . 128 On the other hand, desire ( kamah ) is never extinguished by the enjoyment of the desired object; it grows only stronger like fire fed with clarified butter . 129 One must, therefore, – and especially the student must, (because Manu is dealing with the life of a student [brahmaeharyasrama] in this section) – try his utmost to subdue the urges for sensual pleasures (vishaya). And the best way to subdue and keep under control

the organs which are attached to sensual pleasure is, not by mere abstinence ( asevd ) from them, but by constantly engaging oneself in the pursuit of studies ( jndna ). 130 Mere repression of desires is not so much effective in achieving self-control as the purposeful engaging of one's mind in the pursuit of better and more desirable things would prove to be. Manu indeed declares that "not a single act here below appears to have been done by a man free from kama;

123. Man. ii, 118.

124. Man. ii, 97.

125. Man. ii, 160\* " Yasya vang-manasi suddhe samyagupte cha sarvada/so vai sarvam avapnoti veddntopagatam phaia. u

126. Man. ii, 88.

127. Manu. ii, 90-92

128. Man. ii, 93.

129. Man. ii, 94.

130. Man. ii, 96.

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for whatever he does, it is the result of the prompting of kama"1 m What every one has to take care of is to see that these desires or kamas are directed in the proper manner, and towards proper ends. This is the purpose of education, – to train the young student to direct his energies towards right activities . 132

Kauulya also has declared that the main purpose of education is the control of the organs of sense . 133 "Absence of discrepancy (avipratipatti) in the perception of sound, touch, colour, flavour, and scent by means of the ear, the eyes, the tongue and the nose is what is meant by the control of the organs of sense ( indnyajayah )" says Kautilya. " Strict observance of the precepts of sciences (< Sdstranushthnam )", he further proceeds, "also means the same; for the sole aim of all sciences is nothing but control of the organs of sense ( kritsnam hi fastramidam indnyajayah) 134 ; whosoever is of reverse character, whosoever has not his organs of sense under control, will soon perish, though he possesses the whole earth bound by the four ends of the world/' The young student is, therefore,

enjoined to “abandon lust (kama), anger ( krodha ), greed ( lobha ), vanity ( mdna ), conceit (madu), and overjoy (Tiarsha )”. 135 Says the Mahobharata, also: “Knowledge of the sastras is said to bear fruit when it produces modesty and virtuous conduct ”. 136 And the Sukra Niti similarly observes: “The mind covetous of the meat of enjoyable things, sends forth the senses – sound, touch, sight, taste and smell; any of these five by itself is sufficient to cause destruction. Therefore, one should check the mind; for when the mind is controlled, the senses are conquered ”. 137 The student ought to keep himself away from gambling (dyutam), idle disputes (lana-vadam) , back-biting or talking scandals (parivadam), and lying ( anritam ). So also has he to abstain from looking at and touching women (strinam preksanalambham) , and from hurting

131. Mian, ii, 4; Akamasya kriyd kachit drisyate neha karhichit/ yad yaddhi kuruU kinchit tattat kdmasya cheshtitam // also, Man. ii, 2. See also our discussion on the purushdrthas m Ch. Ill, supra .

132. Man. ii, 3 and 5.

133. Artba. i, iii, 12, 1-2.

134. Artha : ibid, Tr. by Samasastry, p. 10.

135. Artha : ibid, Tr by Samasastry, p. 10.

136. Maha. Sabha. 5, 112.

137. Sukra. p. 195-6 (Sarkar’s Tr.).

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others . 138 It was well recognised that mere knowledge without a proper discipline and training in self-control would prove of little avail to a person who desired to promote his own happiness and progress as well as of those around him.

Thus, the teacher’s duty under the Hindu system of education was to help to cultivate the moral culture of his pupil along with his intellectual culture. The harm that results, in our own times, out of the separation of the moral from the intellectual development of the young boys is expressed thus ably by John Dewey: “The much lamented separation m the (modern) schools, of intellectual and moral training, of acquiring information and growing in



character, is simply one expression of the failure to conceive and construct the school as a social institution, having a social life and value within itself '. 139 "It is false psychology", says R. B. Cattell, "to draw any sharp distinction between character training and the acquisition of knowledge. Habits of behaviour, such as honesty, fair play, tidiness, etc., have been produced under experimental conditions; and it has been found out that they only maintain themselves in the field in which they were taught. This means that a boy who has learned fair play and honesty on the playing fields of Eton may yet show no signs of them on the Stock Exchange " ud And in this connection, the problem of "transfer of training", i.e. the carry-over of the attitudes developed during the early period of training to the later actual situations in life, is one of the biggest problems in all educational systems. Mere class instruction and lecturing on general principles like "honesty is the best policy" does not lead the trainee to observe honesty when it actually comes to behaving in a given situation. Character training depends for its lasting effect on learning through experiencing and doing . Besides, example is always better than precept in character training. Therefore, every efficient scheme of education must always find an adequate place for the moral training of the young along with the courses devised for their intellectual training; and, it must also be placed in the hands of teachers who are intellectual as well as moral leaders themselves. In the words of Sir T. P. Nurm: "The school must be thought of primarily not as a place where certain

138. Man. ii t 179 ; also Ap. i, 3. 11, 17-24.

139. Dewey ; "Moral Principles in Education\*", p. 15.

140. Cattell : " Psychology and Social Progress", p. 374.

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knowledge is learnt, but as a place where the young are initiated in certain forms of activity namely, those that are of greatest and most permanent significance in the wider world. Those activities fall naturally into two groups: In the first, we place the activities that safeguard the conditions and maintain the standard of individual and social life; such as the care of the health and bodily grace, manners, social organization, morals and religion; in the second, the typical creative activities that constitute, so to speak, the solid tissue of civilization; these are, the arts, the sciences,

and literature .” 141

In the Hindu scheme of education both these aims of education were thought out by the Hindus, in their own way, as inseparable complements that made one whole system. This is so forcefully expressed by the Taittmya Upamśad when it declares: Justice ( ritam ), reading and teaching have to be practised together; truth ( satyam ), reading and teaching have to be practised simultaneously: sublimation ( damah ) or self-control, reading and teaching have to be carried on together; tranquility of mind ( samah ), reading and teaching have to be practised at the same time; the worship of sacred fires, reading and teaching have to be practised side by side; burnt offerings, reading and teaching have also to be carried on side by side; nay, even the duties and obligations towards strangers and guests ( atithayah ), duties as a human being ( manusham ), duties of begetting offspring and those towards descendants, have to be practised by man in conjunction with his studies and teaching . 142

In all writings on the life and programme of the student, the Hindu Sastrakaras have laid the greatest emphasis on the importance of the virtue of celibacy ( brahmacharya ) in the development of the moral culture of a student. The powers of brahmacharya have been described to be so great that the Rig Veda declares that by virtue of it, a King is able to rule his kingdom efficiently, the

141. Nunn : Education . Its Data and First Principles, pp. 242-3.

142. Tatt. Up. Siksha. Vallt, 9 . “ Ritam cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha, satyam cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha , domes cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha samas cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha , agtu - hatram cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha , atithayas cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha, manusham cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha, prajd cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha, prajanaś cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha y prajdtii cha svadhyaya-pravachane cha r

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gods themselves were able to attain immortality, and Indra was able to achieve the position of the chief of Gods . 143 Some authorities would forbid the young student even from “looking at or touching women” 144 Kautilya, speaking about the duties of a prince-student, says that he should observe celibacy till he becomes sixteen years of age . 145 “Let him always sleep alone”; says Manu, “let him never waste his manhood; for he who voluntarily

emits his manhood, breaks his vow ( vrataṃ )". 146 This quality of brahmacharya, of celibacy, was thought to be so very essential for a student, that in the course of time, this Sanskrit word itself has come to acquire the very meaning of studenthood; the word brahmacharya has thus become synonymous with "studenthood". Every student, in order to increase the spiritual prowess (tapo-vridhyartham) , must observe brahmacharya till he completes his studies . 147 It was thought to be incumbent upon the student to cultivate habits of purity of thought and action, as well as of the body.

One of the very important considerations with regard to a system of education is the place, value and method of punishment in that system. Should every lapse on the part of the pupil be met with by the rod? Should the fear of punishment for ever loom large before the horizon of the student's vision in order to prevent him from committing mistakes? Or should his native love for the right and hate of the wrong be aroused and cultivated by a sympathetic appeal to his heart and he be thus convinced that it would be in his own best interest that he should never commit a wrong again? The Hindus have answered this question in favour of sympathetic treatment in dealing with the pupil; though, according to them, the rod may be of some use at times, if properly applied, Manu is quite emphatic on this point; and Gautama and Apastamba agree with him: "Created beings", says Manu, "must be instructed in what concerns their welfare without giving them pain; and sweet and gentle speech ( vakchaiva madhura ślakṣṇa ) must be used by a

143. Rig. xi, 5-19.

144. Man. ii, 179, and Gop. Br. i, 2, 1-8.

145. Arih. p. 19.

146. Man. ii, 180,

147. See Tait. Ar. ii, I; Man. ii, 175; Yaj. i, 33; Kam. Su. i, n, 2-3; Paras G 5. ii, 5, 12; Gobh. G. S. ii, 1\* 16; etc.

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teacher who desires to abide by what is dharma ". 148 At other places, he has said that the teacher may beat his pupil, if he has committed a fault ( aparadha ), with a rope or a stick; but this can

be done only on the back, and never on any of the noble parts of the body ( uttamdnaga ) ; but, even this can be done, again, only with a view to correct or improve the student (sishtyartham ) , and with no other motive . 149 Similar observations with regard to the use of the rod are made by the Gautama, Vishnu and in the Maha-bharata . 15 °

The social bearing of the use of the rod for correcting the young is quite apparent. Locke has expressed it in these words: "If the mind be curbed and humbled too much in childhood, if their spirits be abashed and broken much by too strict a hand over them, they lose all their vigour and industry, and are in a worse state than the former. For, extravagant young fellows that have liveliness and spirit, come sometimes to be set right and so make able and great men; but dejected minds, and low spirits are hardly ever to be raised, and very seldom attain to anything. To avoid danger that is on either hand is the great art; and he that has found a way to keep up a child's spirit easy, active, and free, and yet at the same time to restrain him from many things he has a mind to, and to draw him to things that are necessary to him; – he, that knows how to reconcile these seeming contradictions, has, in my opinion, got the true secret of education ". 161 O'Shea has shown, by giving instances of the use and spare of the rod in different countries of Europe and America, how in actual results the rod is ineffective as a measure of corrective . 162 In France, for instance, corporal punishment was absolutely prohibited while in Germany it was the most used, in public schools. But the German student, as soon as he left the school and joined the University where the control at the point of the rod was taken off, got into more riotous moods than his French brother.

What is essential for the real discipline of the student, there-

148. Man. ii, 159; and Gaut ii, 42; Ap. i, 8. 25-30.

149. Man. viii, 299-300 and 164.

150. Gaut. ii, 42; Vis. bod. 80-81; Maha. Anu. 104, 37\*

151. Quick: "Locke on education p. 46; – Quoted by O'Shea: Op. cit. p. 260. (The above quotation is slightly modified, as the original one is in old English.)

152. O'Shea : Op. dt. t pp. 34 6ff.

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fore, is more a habit of self-control than a control imposed from without. Control from without leads to fear of the control if the fault or mistake is discovered, and therefore, the student may be driven to acts of concealment to avoid the control; it may at best prevent recurrence of mistakes as long as the fear of that control from outside exists; and at worst it may create a psychological framework of a hesitating and halting disposition in the future man. Self-control, on the other hand, is bound to be permanently effective in the individual. It is the basis of the strength of character and firmness of mind upon which, ultimately, effective and well-regulated conduct must depend; and this is entirely opposite of the hesitating and irregular conduct which is the outcome of direction and control from without by the help of fear.

We thus see that the Hindu student had to learn habits of simple life, honesty, modesty and cleanliness. He had to undergo a discipline in self-control. He was by his svadharma bound to be friendly to all living creatures. He was to avoid bad company. In the matter of his material needs, he was to remain satisfied only with what was absolutely necessary for his bodily upkeep, whether he was a king's son or a pauper's. Under the roof of the Guru's abode, all students had the same status with reference to each other; and every one of them had to observe the same rules of discipline and of simple living. One would very much like to see this principle of equality of treatment, and habits of simple living being introduced in the modern schemes of education. As for equality of treatment, though it is absent today where it is most needed, it is conspicuously present where it ought not to be so at all: Equality of treatment in regard to the material needs of the young students has given place to equality of treatment in regard to their intellectual needs in a sense that is quite undesirable. Education, especially in the modern class-room, is based on standardization. It cannot proceed unless it takes for granted that all the students in the class possess the same or about the same intellectual abilities, the same capacities to grasp, the same mental outfit, and the same intellectual needs also. All this is as injurious and unwise as anything could be! And, proceeding upon this assumption of equal abilities and equal interests, the whole class is made to go through the self-same intellectual exercises, without regard to the personal differences of

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interests and abilities between the members of the class. Any

scheme of education which is based on such a fundamentally false and dangerous psychological assumption must necessarily tend to retard the progress of the inherent capacities of students who may be above average in the class, while others who are below that average might continue to progress only in their inability to keep pace with the class! At best, such a system of education may yield its fullest and best advantages to the child of average intellect only. In all probability, it has been devised with reference to some vague notion and basis of "average ability". The Hindu educator of old times, however, believed strongly in individual attention to the pupil, regarded every student as his own son, and made full allowances for individual differences in learning abilities between those different young men that came to him to learn and to know and to do. We have several instances of how the Hindu student was, each with reference to his own talent, personally attached to the teacher – as for example, in the relations that existed between Dronacharya and the Kaurava princes, and between Parasurama and Karna, in the Mahabharata; between Visvamitra and the sons of King Dasaratha in the Ramayana; and between Vasishtha and his pupils in Raghuvansa (Canto I).

It stands to reason to infer that education in ancient India was free from any external control like that of the State or the Government or any party politics. It was one of the King's duties to see that the learned pundits pursued their studies and their duty of imparting knowledge without interference from any source whatever. So also, education did not suffer from any communal interest or prejudices in India. 153 Again, there were no fixed

153. The deportation of the great scientist, Albert Einstein, along with many others, from Germany because he belonged to a race different from that of the dominant political party illustrates how education has been influenced by party politics in modern times. The "Nature", a leading British Scientific journal, gives a report as to how another great man of science of Germany, and himself a Nobel Laureate, Professor Lenard, was influenced by the political views of the Government and denounced any "intellectual follower of a Jew". [See "Nature", No. 3422 Vol. 135, (June 1, 1935), p. 9191.

Some more instances illustrating the unhealthy influence of politics on Education are also given by Professor Newlon of the Teachers' College, Columbia University. Writing on "Forms of Repression" upon teaching in the U. S. A, he observes : "Repression takes various forms. Reference has already been made

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curricula of studies that bound down the student or the teacher  
 So that there was no censorship or limitation laid down in the  
 matter of the quality or variety of courses to be studied or taught  
 according to the individual needs or tastes of the pupils. Anything  
 worth knowing, and everything that was known by the teacher,  
 could be taught by the teacher and learnt by the student. The  
 teacher, as we have already seen, was to explain truth exactly  
 as he knew it; he was enjoined not to keep back any knowledge  
 from his student. He never worked under the influence of any  
 person, institution or sect. And yet he was a person always hon-  
 oured, respected, and listened to even by the King; and no one,  
 not even the King, could domineer over him. He was not “employ-

to the growing tendency to legislate the content of the curriculum – to compel  
 by law the study of particular subject-matter . or to delimit severely the areas  
 of study. . ”

“If any reader questions the reality of this problem, he is referred to Dr.  
 Howard Beal’s study of freedom of teaching in the United States”. (The study  
 by Beale is, “Are American Teachers Free Scribner’s, 1936) “Or he  
 is referred to numerous instances of dismissal, such as the dismissal of Professor  
 Turner and others from the University of Pittsburgh and Professor Carrothers  
 from the University of Ohio for political activities ; this list could be extended  
 indefinitely; instances might be included of dismissal of teachers in the last  
 twenty years in almost every State in the Union because they dared to make  
 controversial social problems the subject of study in their classrooms or because  
 of their alleged dangerous political views ” – Ch. X : ‘Freedom of Teaching/\*  
 pp. 268 ff., in “ Teacher and the Society”, (First Yearbook of the John Dewey  
 Society). Appleton-Century, London and New York, 1937.

Recently Mr. Bertrand Russell, one of the most famous thinkers and reformers  
 of today and a writer of some well-known books on social philosophy and meta-  
 physics, has been “judicially pronounced unworthy to become a Professor” in  
 America. And, Mr. Russell brandishes this on the title page of one of his recent  
 books, “The Meaning of Truth ”, (Allen & Unwin, London, 1940), in the list of  
 titles and qualifications under his name as the author 1

During recent years, there have been quite a number of instances of University  
 teachers in the U. S. A. being dismissed for suspected sympathies with  
 Communism or with “un-American activities” !

Our references to German and American conditions above should not lead  
 the reader to imagine that it is only in these countries that the freedom of teach-  
 ing is repressed. Especially, it has been possible to refer to the American conditions  
 so pointedly because, obviously, American scholars feel free to take up and  
 discuss openly any infringement of or encroachment upon the teachers’ freedom  
 by their government or educational authorities, and hence such information is  
 comparatively more readily available in published literature of the U. S. A,

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ed" as a subordinate by any other higher authority. He taught because it was his duty to teach He accepted such pupils as he liked, often after a "test" to find out the seriousness of the purpose of the prospective pupil. He was not controlled by the Kmg, or the State, or by any other organization m regard to the content or the method of teaching. And it is to this kind of long tradition that the teacher m India owes the respect paid to him, even to this day, by the average Hindu, despite the fact that the present day economy and politics has tended to effect a considerable shift in emphasis in one's notions of status, prestige and social eminence.

Nor was the student in Hindu India dominated by the particular ideas and prejudices which ruled his family. We have seen how during the course of his education, the guru becomes his sole mentor. True education, remarks Sumner, "means a development and training of all useful powers which the pupil possesses, and repression of all bad prepossessions which he has inherited ". 154 If a real development of the useful powers of the child is the aim of education, it is essential that his mind should be kept beyond the influence of any family prejudices and family biases, for, these are likely to be founded more on family conveniences rather than upon rational convictions. Among the prepossessions of the child, there are also instinctive prepossessions, apart from the specific family traits. Of these instinctive prepossessions or the original or primitive instincts of the man as they are called, the sex instinct is the most powerful; it is found to be the most potent source of a greater part of the psychic energy of an individual . 165 Now, psycho-analysts tell us that a natural instinct cannot be completely destroyed by repression. On the contrary, such attempts at its repression may lead to certain mental deficiencies, distortions and other harmful effects which go deep into the make up of the child who may have to suffer due to them in later years. The most effective way to control the sway of this natural instinct is to divert the child's psychic

154. Sumner : "Fotfovays", p. 634.

155. A. G. Transley's The New Psychology and Its Relation to Life, (Allen & Unwin, 11th imp.. 1929) , esp, ch. vii gives an account of psycho-analysis which is extremely lucid and fascinating and at the same time scientific for the general reader. Calvin S. Hairs A Primer of Freudian Psychology ( A mentor book, pub. by the New American Library, 1955) is a concise and accurate presentation of Freud's theories.



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energies to other proper channels. fit In years before puberty\* 15 , aptly observed Professor Tansley, “almost any direction can be impressed upon the developing mind by appropriate and sufficiently severe training”. 156 By insistence on brahmacharya m deed and word as well as in thought, the Hindu system of education attempted to keep the student’s psychic energies in proper directions. Further, throughout the day, the student was kept engaged either in studies, or in doing some personal or religious duties, or in bringing food or wood for fuel, or m some way or other helping himself or his guru or guests ( atithi ) . Purity of 'body, mind and thought was always insisted upon by the teacher in regard to the day-to-day behaviour of the student, not merely by injunctions, but by keeping him occupied in activities conducive to the development of good moral and intellectual habits and also by his own example. Besides, his environment was kept free from all mundane affairs and temptations and complex human relationships and interests. The best part of the student’s energies was thus directed towards studies and the formation of good habits.

\* \* \* \*

The Hindu scheme of education which we have portrayed so far seems to have been formulated with reference to the sons of India only; there seems to have been no place in that scheme for the daughters of India. It seems, however, that in the Vedic India women were able to achieve educational attainments similar to what men could achieve. The eighth and the tenth mandala of Rigveda describe the man and his wife participating in sacrificial arrangements and performing the recitations of mantras together. 157 Brahmin girls were taught Vedic lore, and Kshatriya girls were taught the use of the bow and arrow, 158 In the Kaushitaki Brahmana there is mentioned a lady named Pathyavasti who obtained the title of Vdk (Learned Lady) after finishing her course of studies. 159 A lady named Gandharvagrihita is spoken of as having specialized in a certain branch of knowledge (viseshavijnd) , 160 So also, in the Brihaddranyaka Upanishad there are references to edu-

156. Tansley : “The New Psychology”, p. 95.

157. Rig. viii, 31, 5 ; 94 ; 10.

158. Rig. i, 112, 10 ; x, 102-2.

159. From Muir's “Original Sanskrit Texts ” Vol v, p. 388.

16a In Kaush. Br. ii, 9 ; and in Ait. Br. v. 29.

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cation of women and to highly educated women of early India. For instance, a certain ritual is mentioned for the father who desires his daughter to become a panditā, that is, a learned scholar; 161 so also, in the second chapter, we find Yajñavalkya's wife Maitreyī discussing with her husband some problems of the deepest philosophical import, like the destiny of the soul after death; 162 and in the third chapter, a lady named Gargī Vachaknavī is one of the learned participants in the debate held at King Janaka's Sacrificial Assembly. 163 Besides, two ladies named Ghoshā and Lopamudrā are spoken of in the R̥gveda Samhitā as being Mantradānīkās, that is to say, well-versed in the mantras. 164 Then, particular mantras are enjoined to be recited by the wife, according to Asvaldyana Srauta Sūtra; 166 which means that the wife was expected to know some mantras at least. According to this and other Sūtras it seems that every housewife must have had education; for, otherwise, she would be unable to participate at a sacrifice as described by them. 166

Patanjali, in his Mahābhāṣya, refers to the lady scholars of his times who were well-versed in the "Mīmāṃsāśāstra", a work written by a lady called Kāśikrīṣṇī; and these women were known as Kāśikrīṣṇī Brāhmaṇīs. 167 Patanjali also distinguishes the word upādhyāyā from upādhyāyānī: Upādhyāyā is a lady teacher under whom one studies; while an upādhyāyānī is the wife of an upādhyāyā or a teacher. 168 Similarly, the lexicon Amara-Kośha too points out that the term upādhyāyā refers to a lady who is herself able to give learned discourses. 169 The Amara-Kośha also distinguishes two other terms of like connotations, dchdryānī and achdryā: dchdryānī refers to the wife of an dcharya (male teacher); but dchdryā refers to a lady-teacher, who could lecture on mantras. 176 Patanjali also mentions women who were spear-

161. Br. up. vi, 4-17.

162. *ibid*, ii, 4.

163. *ibid*, hi, 6-1.

164. R̥g. Sam. I, 179 and ix, 30-40.

165. Asv. Srauta. Su i, ii; Vedam patnyai praddya vachayet,

166. Go. G.S. i, 3, 14-15; Kh. G.S. i, 5, 17.

167. Pat. iv, 1, 140.

168. *ibid*, iii, 322.

169. Upadhyaya svayacrñ vidyopadeim.

170. Sydd dchdrydpi svata-svayam mantra-vydkhydtrx.

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bearers ( saktikis ). It is reasonable to infer from this, that there must have been quite a number of women who underwent all the courses of studies and became learned professors, and also women who chose to learn the art of fighting, for otherwise it is not possible for the terms like Kasakñtsnd Brdhmanis denoting a whole class of women teachers, and also the terms upadhyaya and dchdryd , to have originated.

In the Epics, there are several references to educated women  
In the Ramdyana , Ramaehandra, the hero of that epic, finds his mother in the act of offering oblations with the necessary mantras , when he goes to bid farewell to her preparatory to his journey to the forest 171 Tara, the wife of Vali, is referred to as a lady who had learnt mantras ( mantravid ) 172 Hanumant, when he is unable to find Sita in the city of Lanka, feels sure that he would be able to meet her at the time of sunset on the bank of the river; for Hanumant knows for certain that she was sure to come there to perform her sandhya (evening prayers and oblations which are accompanied by the repetition of mantras) . 173 And, in the same epic, we are told that Atreyt studied in the dsrama of teacher Valmlki along with Rama's sons Lava and Kusa. In the same manner, the Mahd-bhdrata supplies us with instances to show that women acquired learning in those days like men. A lady named Siva was learned in the Vedas (Vedaparaga) , 174 In the Udyogaparva, queen Vidul gives a long discourse to her son who ran away from the battlefield, on the dharma of a Kshatriya. Another lady, princess Sulabha lectures on the principles and methods of yoga , samddhi and mokfa to King Janaka . 175 In the Vanaparva again, King Virata is found employing a woman named Brihannada as a tutor in the fine arts – dancing, music and painting – to the ladies of the palace The Bhdgawata Parana tells us that the daughters of Daksayana were proficient in philosophical and religious studies . 176 In his Arthashastra, Kautilya has mentioned women archers ( striganaih dhanvibhih) .

171. Ayodhya 20, 15

172. iv, 16-12

173. Sundar. 15, 48.

174. Vanaparva.

175. Maha. Santi. 321.

176. Bhag Pura, iv, 1-64.

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Similarly in the noetic and dramatic literature, we find actual references to ladies who were able to read and write, and in some cases at least, were even learned. In the drama called Sakuntalam of Kalidasa, for instance, Sakuntala is said to have written a love letter to her lover. In the same poet's Raghuvamsa, the wife of King Aja is described as his own dearest disciple in the literary and fine arts ( priyaJishyd lalite kalavidhau ). In another poem of his called the Meghaduta, the heroine of the poem is described as composing poems when the pangs of separation from her lover become unbearable to her. In Bhavabhuti's drama Mdlati-Madhavam, a lady called Kamandaki is mentioned as a student studying along with the boys. So again, in the Kavyamimamsa of Rajasekhara are mentioned some learned ladies, – viz. Silabhattarika, the poetess who was well-known for ease and grace of style and harmony of sound and sense; 177 Devi, who continued to occupy the hearts of her readers even after her death; 178 Vijayanka, the Goddess of Learning (Saraswati) incarnate who was next only to Kalidasa; 179 Vikalanitamba, whose poetry was extremely sweet; Vijjika who was also Saraswati incarnate; Prabhadevi, who was adept in all the arts; and Avantisundari, the wife of the poet himself, – she was a writer on the science of poetics. 180 As late as in the times of Sankaracharya (b. 788 A.D.), when there was a debate between him and another great scholar Mandanamisra, in regard to the opposite philosophical systems which they held, Mandanamisra's wife was appointed as the sole judge before whom the contestants argued their cases, 181 – a debate which was of momentous significance in the history of Indian philosophical thought in determining which

177. Sabdhdrthayo samo gumphah panchaR vrittir ishyate .

Silabhattarika vachi Bayoktishu cha yd sadd .

178. suktlnam smaraketwam kaldndm cha vilasabhuh,  
prabhur Devi kav I Ic4i gate? pi kridt tishfhatl

179. Saraswativa karnati Vijayanka jayatyasau,

yd vaidarbkagirdm vdsah Kaliddsad anantaram.  
nHotpala-dala-Sydmam Vijaydnkdm ajdnatd ,  
vritkaiva Dasxdindpyuktam sarva-iukta Saraswatl

– from Sukti-MuktavaH .

180. See Venkatesvara : "Indian Culture through the Ages ", Vol i, (1928),  
P 293.

181. Sankara-dig-vijoyoy VIII, 51 : vidhdya bkarydm vidushtm . soda-  
tt&m vidbiyatdm pdda-kathd sudkindra.

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of fee two schools of thought was superior, in which Sankaracharya  
wo'j adjudged victorious.

"The "Samskdraprakdsa" of Viramitrodaya says that xn former  
times (pure), there were two kinds of women: (1) the Brahma -  
vddirus who continued acquiring knowledge of the Vedas, sacrificing,  
and begging alms in their own homes; and (2) the Sadyovadhus  
who married as soon as they attained the marriageable age. 182 Then  
he proceeds to quote some now well-known verses, from Yama-Smriti  
and Hdrita-Smrti , in his support; these verses also record that in  
former times {pure} ladies used to go through the ceremony (sams-  
kdra) of initiation (nwunjz-bavdfianam) and enter fee order of  
Brahmacharya ; but, n is added, that these women had to pursue  
their studies under fee guidance of fee father, uncle or brother  
only, and of no other person 193

But if we turn to fee other Smritis , we find a different rule laid  
down for women in regard to the initiation sacrament. In the  
opinion of Manu, the marriage ceremony ( vawdhiko vidhih ) of a  
maiden is equivalent to the imtiation ceremony of a boy; and serving  
her husband (patisevd) and staying with him is equivalent to the  
boy's service of the guru and residence in his dsrama. 1M On the  
other hand, however, Manu and Yajnavalkya also expect every  
housewife to keep accounts of the family income and expenditure. 185

According to the scheme detailed out by Vatsyayana, women are to be taught the sixty-four kolas or arts of life, of which he has given a list 186 The list includes such items as music, painting, knowledge of the language current in the country (desabhdshdvi~ jnanam ), and even the game of dice ( dyutavUeshah ) and other indoor physical games ( krtdd ). Vatsyayana discusses the question whether women should be taught these, though the content of his

182. See ' Viramttrodayah ' of Mm. Pt. Mitra Misra, Ed. by P. N. Sharma fChowkhamba Sanskrit Series), Benares, (1919) Section on ' Stryupanayand pp. 402-5.

183. Pura kalpe tu ndrwdm maunji-bandkanom ishyatf/adhydpanatn tu v-eddnam savitri vachanam tathd// pitd pitnvyo bhrdtd vd namam adhydpapayet parah/svagrihe chdva kanydyd bhaikshackaryd vidhlyate/ / The same quotations from Harita and Yama are also given by Madhavacbarya cm Pard&TO'Samkitd (Born. Sansk. Ser. Vol. I, pt ii, pp. 82-84).

X84. Man. ii, 67 ; d. YSj. i, 13.

185. Man. v, 150 ; Vaj. i, 83 ; cf. also Vis. xxv, 5-6.

186 . Kam. i, iii, 1-15 ; cf. also Sukra-Nlti.

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scheme of education for women is, as we have seen above, different from that of men.

Thus, both Manu and Vatsyayana seem to think that the women's sphere of action lies in the home and that their education, therefore, must be such as to help them m securing comfort for the husband and for the other members of the family. Hence, though in the early vedic period women were able to secure the same education as men on equal terms, later on, it seems, that the content and also mode of the education for the two sexes came to be differentiated. Woman's services to the society seem to have been conceived as concerned with, in and through the home and the family. Due to this, it may be said that on the whole, in the later history of Hindu civilization, the Indian woman has had much less chances of education as compared with the chances man was accorded . 187

The above review of the salient features of the Hindu educational system will prove sufficient to impress upon our minds how

it functioned as a social organization calculated to create, – so far as males at least were concerned – strong personalities whose reason was sought to be kept ever awake, whose mental powers and capacities were well-developed, whose understanding of the meaning of life, in general and in detail, was founded on a broad basis unaffected by any political, family or secular interest, and whose intellectual impulse to learn was kept pure and alive, unsullied by any pecuniary motive.

There have been no definite rules prescribed as to the period for which a student is expected to continue his studies under the guidance of his teacher. Manu, for instance, lays down that the vrata of studentship may be observed for thirty-six years, or for half the time or for one-fourth of the time, or, in the alternative, till the student has perfectly learnt the Vedas . 188 On the eve of his departure for home after completing his studies, the teacher advised the student in these words, according to the Taittiriya Upanishad : “Speak the truth, follow dharma, never, swerve from thy own studies. Having pleased the acharya with a gift of his choice, you

187. See also Ch. vii, infra , ,

183. Man. iii, 1: cf. also, ASv. G.S. i, 22, 3: Par. G.S.; ii, 5, 13-15; Yaj. I, 36 Apa. i, 2, 12-16.

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should now marry and see that you do not break the family lineage Ne^er swerve from truth and dharma Take good care of your welfare ( kusala ). Do not miss any opportunity of success or prosperity (hhuti) m life. Do not miss your duties towards gods and ancestors. Regard your mother as your god, the father as god, the teacher as god, the guest as god; and as such, pay their dues to them. Do such deeds only as are regarded unblameable by people and not others; and emulate respectfully only those actions of ours which are praiseworthy and not others ”. 1 S9

Thus, the fundamental lesson in brahmachary dsrama was in answer to the quest: What is Dharma ? In this dsrama, the pupil is taught his dharma, primarily as a pupil so far as his studies (adhyayana) are concerned, but also with reference to the future man in him, who is to go out into the society as a grihastha, the householder, the social man, the gentleman. The reading, writing, arts, sciences, and other studies also have to be consistent with the dharma laid down for man. He is to keep under control artha and

kdma completely in accordance with his dharma in the brahma-charyadhrama. In fact, in this dsrama , dharma is the only immediate aim for the pupil, and his whole behaviour and conduct ( dchdra ) is in terms of dharma only. The rules and definitions of such behaviour are known as vratas, which include study proper as one of them, the various other rules of conduct constituting the rest of them. We have described these throughout this chapter.

After the student has completed his course of studies, he leaves the place of the dcharya and journeys back home; this is called Samdvartana (returning back ). 190 He is now to take a bath ( sndna ) symbolizing his 'washing off' as it were, of the brahmachai'ya vrata, and is therefore known as a snataka , 191

189. Taitt, Siksa, Valll, 9: V edamanuchya dchdryo ntevddnam amddstt sat yam vada, dharmam chara, svddhyaym md pramadah/dcharyadya pnyam dhcmant arhitya praja-tantum md vyavachchetsih/satydn na pramaditavyam , dharman tut pramaditavyam , kusaldn na pramaditavyam, bhutyai na pranta - ditavyam, svddhyadya-pravachandbhydm na pramaditavyam, devorpitri-kdTydbhydm fit % pramaditavyam fm8tri-devo bhava, pi tn-devo bhava , dchdrya-devo bhava , athithi-devo bhava/ yanyamvadydni karmani tani sevitavydni, no itardni/ ydnyasmdkam sue hari tani tani tvayo'pasyar.i, no itardni .

190. San. G. S. ii, 18 1-4, etc.

191. San. G. S. lii, 1; Par. G. S. ii, 6, 1 Apa. G, S.: v, 12, 1; Man. ih 4; Yap i, 51; etc.

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The brahmachdri has to fulfil all vratas of b ra hmac harydhama before he passes on to the next dsrama , 192 In fact, some scriptures speak of three kinds of students, who have completed their career of brahmacharydsrama: (1) the vidyd-snatak 193 (2) the vrata-snatdka, and (3) the vidya-vrata-sndtaka. The vidya-snataka is one who ends his student's career as soon as his studies are finished but before he has been able to fulfil the vratas laid down for the brahmachdri. The vrata-sndtaka is one who has fulfilled all the vratas satisfactorily, but has not completed all the studies. The vidydvrata-sndtaka ) on the other hand, is one who ends his student's career after completing the course of his studies as well as fu lfillin g his vratas , 194 The implication seems to be that one who has completed both his vidyas as well as vratas is a better brahmachdri than one who has completed either only.



We may close this chapter with the following quotation from the Satapatha Brahmana which quite admirably sums up the main virtues and aims of education as conceived by the Hindus:

“Now, then, in praise of learning: Learning and teaching are a source of pleasure to man; he becomes ready minded, or mentally well equipped ( yuktamanah ) and independent of others, and day by day he acquires prosperity. He sleeps peacefully; he is the best physician for himself; and (peculiar) to him are restraint of the senses, delight in steadiness of mind ( ekadmatd ), development of intelligence, fame” and, last but not the least in importance, “the task of perfecting the people”. 196

192. Man. G. S. i, I, I: “ Upanayandt prabkriti vratacharl syat \*\*

193. PSr. G. S. ii, 5, 32; cf. Man. iv, 31; Ap. i, 30, 1-3; Kulluka. on Mian, iii, 2, quotes a similar passage, describing the three kinds of smtakeu as above, from Harita.

194. PSr. G. S. ii, 5, 3M5.

19&, Sat, Br. ad, 5. 7, 1: The above translation is slightly modified from that of J. EggeJing, in SJ3.E. Vol adiv, p. 99.

## CHAPTER V

### MARRIAGE

I N SPITE of the fact that many authoritative works on India and Indian life are seemg the light of the day, some writers m the West still seem to be persistent in their ignorance about India, or in their method of gathermg information about India from unauthoritative quarters and refusal to choose first-hand sources of information. There is yet a lamentable ignorance prevailing in the West regarding the Hindus and their ways and the realities of Hindu social psychology; and this can be said to be the case even among some of the eminent social anthropologists, who have shown no hesitation in making wild generalizations about India and her people on fragmentary or partial information.

For instance, Robert Briffault's essay on “Sex m Religion ” 1 refers to India as a place “where the harvest festival is a signal for general license, and such general license, is looked upon as a matter of absolute necessity. Men set aside ail

conventions and women all modesty and complete liberty is given to the girls .” 2 The same essay gives us other novel pieces of information about India: “In many parts of India, The Brahmans play the part of thorough-bred stallions, upon whom it is incumbent to ennoble the race and cohabit with virgins of inferior caste. The venerable personage scours the town and country, the people give him presents of money and stuff; they wash his feet, drink the dirty water and preserve the rest. After a repast of dainty meals, he is conducted to the nuptial couch, where crowned with flowers, the virgin awaits him’. The first child is accordingly held particularly

1. In Sex in Civilization edited by Calverton and Schmalhausen, New York, p. 34.

2 Mr Briffault does not name the authority upon which he relies for this curious piece of information, though he evidently gives this as a quotation from somebody.

Ii S.O. – 10

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sacred, and is spoke of as 'bom by the grace of God” 3 Here is another piece of information from the same source: "In India the amount of rain is thought to be proportionate to the number of marriages that have taken place during the season .” 4 In the same strain, Professor Paolo Mantegazza says this about the Hindus: "In some countries (sic!) of India the creditor has the right to demand the debtor's wife, whom he enjoys until the whole debt has been paid. If the woman remains with him several years, and if the debt has been paid in the meantime, the children bom in this

period are divided between the creditor and debtor ” 5 He gives,

again, only a fraction of a truth when he says that "The Laws of Manu allow a son to be begotten per procura ” 6 ; but this needs a number of qualifications which are mentioned in the Laws of Manu and others.

It is really surprising that such opinions based on incorrect reports should find place in the works of eminent writers. "Unfortunately", as Professor B. Malinowski has so pointedly remarked in his excellent article on "marriage" in the Encyclopaedia Brit -

annica , "we find too often in ethnographical accounts generalities and stock phrases such as that 'the wife is regarded as the personal property of the husband', as 'his slave or chattel', or else again we read that 'the status of the wife is high'. The only correct definition of status can be given by a full enumeration of all mutual duties, of the limits to personal liberty established by marriage, and of the safeguards against the husband's brutality or remissness, or, on the other hand, against the wife's shrewishness and lack of sense of duty ". 7

In this chapter, we shall try to present the Hindu view of marriage; and this, in conjunction with the basic attitude towards the family organization and concepts of family duties as indicated in chapter iii, and the discussion of the Hindu conception of the

3. *ibid.* p. 44.

4. *ibid.* p. 45.

5. Sexual Relations of Mankind (Anthropological studies Of Professor P. Mantegazza, of the University of Florence). Privately issued by The Anthropological Branch of Falstaff Press. Tr. by James Bruce Pub : Anthropological Press, New York. 1932.

6. *ibid.*,

7. Entry. Brit, Vol. 14, (14th Ed. 1929), p. 945.

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rights and duties of the husband and the wife in the family treated in the next chapter, will give us a clear idea of the real status of each of them with reference to the other.

The term 'marriage' has been often used to denote a social institution\* complete by itself. 8 But Sumner has drawn our attention

8. Westermarck : " History of Human Marriage", vol. 1 , p. 26.

\* Even though it is not necessary for us, at this place, to go into the details of the analysis of the meaning and implications of the term "institution", the following brief note on the subject may be made, just to show how difficult it is to precisely define the characteristics of

several of the social categories like “social institutions” which are so frequently used by us and with which we are so familiar \*

One of the earliest systematic attempts to come to a precise understanding of the term “social institution” is by Hertzler (see : J O. Hertzler \* Social Institutions , McGraw-Hill, N Y., 1929) After quoting various suggested definitions by writers prior to the book, the author gives a summary of the pertinent characteristics gathered from them of the term “Social Institution” (pp 2-7) Despite this, LaPiere and

Farnsworth have been led to remark that “Hertzler in his book

fails after two hundred and fifteen pages to arrive at a clear-cut definition of his title phrase!” (R T. LaPiere & P. R. Farnsworth, Social Psychology , 2nd Ed, McGraw-Hill, N Y., 1941, p. 302, foot-note.)

See also: Gillin J. L & J. P : Cultural Sociology, Macmillan, New York, 1948, pp 313-26, for a brief outline of the silent features and characteristics of social institutions. Other fuUer treatises on the subject, in addition to Barnes’ mentioned below, are : – -Panunzio, C : Major Social Institutions Macmillan, N. Y., 1939 ; Ballard, L V. : Social Institutions , Century, N Y., 1936.

Sociologists like Harry Elmer Barnes ( Social Institutions , Prentice-Hall, N Y , 1942) would use the term “institution” in a very broad sense, to refer to anything which is socially established. Thus, according to Barnes, “social institutions represen “he social structure and machinery through which human society organizes, directs and executes the multifarious activities required to satisfy human needs.” (p. 29). He also quotes Hamilton’s definition with approval, as a comprehensive definition of social institution: “Institution is a verbal symbol which, for want of a better word, describes a cluster of social usages. It connotes a way of thought or action of some prevalence and permanence, which is embodied in the habits of a group or the customs of the people...” (Article “Institution” in the Ency Soci. Sc, by W. H. Hamilton).

On the other hand, the sociologist Maclver ( Society , Macmillan, London, 1949) would use the term “institution” to mean “the established forms or conditions of procedure characteristic of group activity”, and would distinguish it from another term, “association”, which is used

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to the fact that the word does not truly denote a perfect social institution. “Although we speak of marriage as an institution, it

is only an imperfect one. It has no structure. The family is the institution, and it was antecedent to marriage. " 'Marriage' has always been an elastic and variable usage, as it now is .... In fact the use of language reflects the vagueness of marriage, for we use the word 'marriage' for wedding, nuptials or matrimony (wedlock) . Only the last can be an institution ". 9 As a social institution, marriage is a part of, and should be included in, the family; and even though in a theoretical treatment it precedes considerations about the family, it is actually intended as a preparation for, and, therefore, the supplement of the study of the more inclusive institution called the family.

Similar considerations generally apply also to the discussion of the Hindu vivah (marriage) , and kutumba (family) . For, the vivaha is in essence a ritual and a formality, of course, very important, through which an individual has to go, to be able to start his or her life in the Grihasthdsrama i.e. the householder's life. The

synonymously with it (p. 15). "An association", says Maclver, "is a group organized for the pursuit of an interest or group of interests in common" (p. 12). "Associations are the means or agencies through which the members realize their similar or shared interests" (p. 14).

"When we are considering something as an organized group , it is an association ; if as a form of procedure , it is an institution. Association denotes membership, institution denotes a mode or means of

service" "Every association has, with respect to its particular

interests, its characteristic institutions." Thus, family, which is an association, has marriage as its institution ; it also has the home, the family meal together, and so on, as its institutions. The school or college, as a body of teachers and taught, is an association ; the education system is an institution (p. 16). After having given a critical analysis of the two terms, however, Maclver sounds a note of warning that this distinction should not be rigidly understood. "One note of caution is required ... . These established forms of procedure are clearly methods used by groups of men : whether they are enacted instruments of associations or the unofficially developed patterns of community practice, institutions in life cannot be separated from those who follow their ways. Thus investigation of social reality always includes reference to both human institutions and human groups. However, if the focus is institutional , as we have defined it, it centers upon the procedures themselves." (p. 17).

9. Sumner : " Folkways ", pp. 348-9.

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meaning of vivaha refers mainly to the ceremony of 'carrying away' the bride to the house of the bridegroom (vi + vah^to carry). But the term has long since come to be applied to the whole of the wedlock ceremony.

As a social institution, marriage has been defined by Westermarck "as a relation of one or more men to one or more women which is recognized by custom or law, and involves certain rights and duties both in the case of the parties entering the union and in the case of the children born of it".<sup>10</sup> Such a definition of marriage once more indicates that certain aspects of the family itself are also included in its connotation. Indeed, it would be impossible to study the problem of marriage without at the same time involving ourselves into the discussion of some important and fundamental questions relating to the institution of the family. When Westermarck, for instance, points out that "marriage is something more than a regulated sexual behaviour", and that "it is an economic institution, which may in various ways affect the proprietary rights of the parties",<sup>11</sup> he refers more to the issues connected with the structure and function of the family than to marriage itself. Any discussion of the institution of marriage, therefore, must necessarily include also some of the vital problems connected with the institution of the family. And let us state at the outset that all these considerations are equally true of the Hindu social institution of vivaha.

Among the Hindus, vivaha is generally considered as obligatory for every person; because, in the first place, the birth of a son is said to enable one to obtain moksha. "To be mothers were women created, and to be fathers men; therefore, the Vedas ordain that dharma must be practised by man together with his wife".<sup>12</sup> Vivaha is one of the sarira-samskaras (sacraments sanctifying the body) through each of which every man and woman must pass at the proper age and time (see next Ch. on Family); Manu considers it as a social institution for the regulation of proper relations between the sexes.<sup>13</sup>

Again, it is believed that one's progeny is considerably connected with the performance of vivaha.

10. Westermarck : op cit. p. 26 11- ibid. p. 26.

12. Man. ix, 96 : Prajandartham striyah srishtah santanartham cha mdnava/tasmat sadh&rano dharmah srutau patnyd sahoditah.

13. Man. ix, 25 ; Eshoditd lokaydtrd nityam stripumsayoh tubha.

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ted with and instrumental to happiness both in this world as well as hereafter . 14 "He only is a perfect man, who consists of his wife, himself and his offspring ". 15 There is the story in the Mahdbhdrata of a lady who remained single because she could not find her equal to marry; she then devoted her life to the practice of hard penance till old age with a view to obtaining mokla. But the sage Narada rebuked her for remaining unmarried; he told her that it was impossible for her to gain the ultimate bliss as long as she was not sanctified ( asamskritd ) by marriage rites . 16 Moreover, the birth of a son is conceived to be particularly contributory towards helping the father to execute his obligations which are due to the departed ancestors (pitri-nna ) 17 – one of the three basic social obligations (rinas), each of which every Hindu is in duty bound to fulfil. For a full understanding of these rinas or obligations, the reader is referred to chapter iii, and also chapter vi on the family.

The Hindu Sastrakaras are especially particular about the vivaha of a woman, though it is also enjoined that every male should marry. For, a "wife is the very source ( mulam ) of the purusharthas \* not only of dharma, artha and kama, but even of moksa . Those that have wives can fulfil their due obligations in this world (kriya-vantah ) ; those that have wives, truly lead a family life; those that have wives can be happy; and those that have wives can lead a full life ( sriyanvita )". 18

Most particular care, however, has to be taken to perform the vivaha of maidens as soon as they attain the marriageable age. A girl who continues to stay in her father's home more than three years after attaining puberty, is called a vrishala or a sudrd i.e., a

14. *ibid.* ; also Aiv. G.S. i, 6, ff ; Baudh. ii, 9, 16, 10 ; Ap. ii, 9, 24; 9.

15. Man. ix. 45 : etavdneva purusho yajjayatma vraiet i ha/viprah prdhustatha chaitad yo bharta sd smritdngand./ / The Commentator Kulluka quotes from Vajas. Br. : "That man who does not win a wife is really half (ardho) ; and he is not the full man ( asarvo hi tavad bhavati) as long as he does not beget an offspring (prajayate, etc.)." Also cf. Ap. ii, 14, 16 ; and Brih. Smri. xxiv, 11.

16. Maha. Salya. 52.

17. Man x, 106 ; Baudh. ii, 6, 11, 3 ; Vas. xi, 48 etc. See also Ch. III.

\* For the meaning and analysis of purusharthas as the psycho-moral

bases of social organization in terms of motivating forces of human activity, see ch. iii.

18. MahS. Adi. 74, 40-41.

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very low type; and the father or other guardian of such a girl who is not careful enough to give her in marriage in proper time is said to be incurring a great sin. 19 If her elders fail to arrange her marriage within the proper time, it is permissible for such a young lady to take the whole responsibility upon herself of choosing her life-mate and enter into wedlock with him; she has to wait for three years only after puberty, for some responsible elder to arrange for her marriage, but no more. 20 Vatsyayana, too, advises a young maiden who has attained youth (prapta-yaun and) to select a husband for herself and get married without waiting for the assistance and permission of her elders. 21

This brings us to the various forms of the Hindu marriage. The expression "form of marriage" is generally applied to the numeric variation in the partners in marriage, as Malinowski puts it. Accordingly, the forms of marriage usually listed are monogamy, Polyandry and group marriage. 22 But in dealing with the Hindu *vivaha*, we shall use the expression "form of marriage" conveniently to denote the method of consecrating a marriage-union. The forms that are enumerated are: 23

(1) The Brahma form, consisting of the gift ( *danam* ) of a daughter by the father, after decking her with ornaments, to a man, learned in the Vedas, and of a good character (*srutisilavdn*) whom the bride's father himself invites.

(2) The Daiva form, involving the gift of the daughter as above, to a priest who duly officiates at a sacrifice, during the course of its performance.

(3) The Arsha form, wherein the father gives his daughter in marriage to the bridegroom, after receiving a cow and a bull, or two pairs of these from the bridegroom, in accordance with requirements of dharma (*dharmatah*) and not in any sense with the intention of selling the child ( *na tu hdkabuddhya* , – says Kulluka) . In



19. Man. ix, 93 ; 90 ; Yaj. i, 64 ; Vis. xxiv, 41 ; Vas. xvii, 67-60 ; Baudh. iv, 1, 11, 14 ; Nar. 25-26 ; Gaut. xviii, 23 ; Para. vii. 6. Brihas. Smr. xxiv, 3, speaks of punishing such relatives.

20. *ibid*, (all) ; and Maha. Anu. 44, 16-17.

21. KSma. iii, iv, 36.

22. Ency . Brit., art. "Marriage", vol. 14 (14th Ed. 1929), p. 949.

23. Man. iii, 27-37 ; Yaj. i, 58.

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other words, the gift of cow and bull is to be made as a token of gratitude to the man who offers his daughter to the groom to enable him to fulfil his gnhasthaJrama obligations.

(4) The Prdjdpatya form, in which the father makes a gift of the daughter, by addressing the couple with the mantram "may both of you perform together your dharma " ( sahobhau charatam dharma) , and has done due honour to the bridegroom.

(5) The Asura form: In the four forms mentioned above, the important point to be noted is that it is the father (or a person in his place) who makes a gift ( dona , or praddna) of the bride to the bridegroom. But in the Asura form, the bridegroom has to give money to the father or kinsman of the bride, and thus, in^a:" sense purchases the bride.

(6) The Gandharva form, wherein the mutual love and consent of the bride and bridegroom is the only condition required to bring about the union (ichchhaydnyonyasafnyogah) . Neither the father nor the kinsmen need-have ifhand in bringing about the marriage. As will be seen below, such marriage may be subsequently consecrated by going through the sacred rites of vivdha.

(7) The Rdkshasa form is described as "the forcible abduction of a maiden from her home, while she cries and weeps, after her kinsmen have been slain or wounded and their houses broken." It is the capture of the bride by force.

(8) The Paisdcha form is one in which the man seduces, by stealth, a girl who is sleeping, intoxicated, or disordered in intellect.

In all the Smritis , the descriptions of the forms of marriage are much the same as described above. 24 Manu-Smriti further declares that of these forms, the (1) Brahma, (2) Daiva, (3) Arsha , (4) Prdjpatya, (6) Gandharva and (7) Rdkshasa, are lawful, while the two forms (5) Asura and (8) Paisdcha are unlawful and should never be practised (na kartavyau kadachana ) . 25 According to the Asvalayana Grihya Sutra , the first four of the above forms bring purification (pundti) to twelve, ten, eight and seven ancestors respectively, on both the sides; no such merit is described to be due

24. See Yaj. i, 58-61 ; Vis. xxiv, 18-28 ; Gaut. iv, 6-15 ; Vas. 17-35 ; Baudh. i, 20, 1-21 ; Ap. ii, 11, 17-21 ; The AÆv. G. S. gives the eight forms in this order : Brahma , Daiva, Prdjpatya , Arsha , Gdndharva, Asura ,, Paisdcha and Rdkshasa.

25. Man. iii, 24-251 ; also cf. Maha. Anu. 44, 9.

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to the remaining four. 26

The most approved form of marriage is of course the gift of the maiden, by the father or other guardian, to the bridegroom, i.e., any one of the first four forms. The father, the grandfather, the brothers, the kinsmen, and the mother, in the order in which they are mentioned here, have the right to give a young maiden in marriage, provided the giver be in balanced physical and mental conditions ( prakrtisthah ) , i.e not insane etc. 27

The first qualification needed in a young man for marriage is the fulfilment of his obligations of the student's life. He must have studied, in due order, the three Vedas , or two of them, or at least one, without violating any of the rules of the order of studentship ( aviplitabrahmacharya ) i.e. the first of the four orders (asramas) of life. 28 The K5ma Sutras also follow the Smritis on this point; a person who has completed his course of studies should then enter the householder's order ( gdrhasthya ) , and lead the life of a citizen. 20 In Vatsyayana's opinion, only such an educated youth ( srutawan ) had a right to marry. 30

The bride to be selected must not have been already given to any one before, and she must be a virgin. 31 Love directed to a girl who is already accepted by another ( paraparignhitd ) would be censurable. 32

Sumner characterises this demand for virginity in the maiden to be married as an “appeal to masculine vanity”, and as “a singular extension of the monopoly principle. 33 ...” “In the development of the father family,” he proceeds, “fathers restricted daughters in

26. Asv. G. S. i, 6, 1-8.

27. Yaj. i, 63-64.

28 Man. ni, 2 ; Yaj. i, 52 ; Medhatithi expands the meaning of Manu ii, 2, by saying that one who was well educated can have the right to be a householder : And Asv. G. S. i, 5, 2 says 'buddhimate kanyam prayachchhet' i.e., the daughter should be given in marriage to an intelligent (meaning here, educated) person.

29 Kam. i, 4, 1 : grihltavidyah . . gdrhasthyam adhigamya ndgaraka-vrittam varteta .

30. Kam. iii, 1, 2 : Srutavan sllayet/.

31. Kam. iii, 1, 1 : ananya-purvd ; Yaj. i, 52 : ananya-purvikd ; Gaut. iv, 1 ; Vis. xxiv, 9 ; Vas. iii, 1.

32. Kam. i, 5, 2.

33. Sumner : “Folkways”, p. 358.

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order to make them more valuable as wives. Here comes the notion of virginity and pre-nuptial chastity. This is really a negative and exclusive notion. . . His wife is to be his from the cradle, when he did not know her. Here then, is a new basis for the sex-honour of women and the jealousy of men. Chastity for the un-married means – no one; for the married – none but the husband.” 34

The Hindu Sastrakaras emphasis on pre-nuptial chastity, however, does not seem to have been one-sided, in favour of the female only. The Hindus demanded pre-nuptial chastity on the part of the male as well, in the form of brahmacharya vrata , as we have seen above. Evidently, they were not one-sided in their valuation of chastity, but placed equal value on the pre-nuptial chastity of the boy as they did on the virginity of the maiden. This is further

evident from the elaborate rules laid down for the conduct of the brahmachdn – i.e. every young man's conduct till his marriage, which we have seen in the previous chapter.

There are certain rules of endogamy and exogamy laid down in the Dharma-Sastras, for regulating the Hindu marriage with a view to controlling the choice of mates. According to these, the endogamic rule states that marriage must take place between persons of the same varna\* 5 If a person directs his love towards an unmarried girl of his own varna in accordance with the injunctions of the sastra, his action deserves public (laukikah) fame, (yasasyah) and good progeny (putrtyah). Any other way of love would meet with social disapprobation (pratishiddhah), 36 We may note, here, that in practice the law of endogamy has come to play a very important part with reference to the later jatis within each of the vamas; according to this, the endogamic circle is restricted within the orbit of each of the jatis. This means that members of the same vama who at the same time did not belong to the same jati, could not marry each other as before.

The exogamic rules relating to Hindu marriage form a very complicated subject. The three terms, gotra, pravara and sapinda, used in connection with the laws of exogamy, have undergone so many changes, additions and modifications in their meaning

34. Sumner : \*\*, Folkways ", p. 359.

35. Man. iii, 4 ; Yaj. i, 52 ; Kama, iii, 1, 1 ; etc.

36. Kama, i, 5 f 1-2 ; etc.

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and implications through the ages since their origin, that it becomes well-nigh impossible to find out their original implications. We need not go into the problems of the origin and history of the institutions called gotra and pravara ; for our purposes we shall content ourselves with a very brief general discussion of these terms so as to bring out their social import and relation to marriageability among the Hindus.

So far as the paternal side is concerned the problem is dealt with in terms of gotra; and, with reference to the maternal side it is ordained that a person shall not marry a woman who is a sapinda

on his mother's side, 37 upto the sixth degree in ascending or descending line; this means that sapinda relationship ceases to exist with the seventh degree in ascending or descending line between two individuals with reference to their maternal relatives. 38

Next, we take up the gotra: It has been pointed out that gotra probably meant herd'; 39 and, later on it came to denote the 'family' or the 'clan'. 40 The gotra of a family is said to be named after the rishi-ancestor who founded the family in the immemorial past. It is said that originally there were few gotras in existence. But, later on, as the population went on multiplying, more and more persons attained fame as rishis on account of their achievements; and subsequently, additional gotras came to be formed after the names of these new rishis. 41 Whatever may have been the origin of gotra, the exogamic rule relating to the Hindu marriage according to the Grihya-Sutras and the Dharma-Sdstras is that no man shall marry a maiden from within his own gotra. 42

Closely connected with the gotra is the other term pravara. Pravara literally means 'invocation' or 'summons.' 43 It can be traced

37. Go. G. S. iii, 4, 4-5 ; Hir. G. S. i, 17, 2 ; etc : and Man. iii, 5 ; Yaj. i, 53 ; Bau ii, 37-38 ; Vis xxiv, 9-10 ; Maha Anu. 44, 18 ; etc

38. Man. v, 60 ; Bau. i, 11, 2 ; Vis. xxii, 5 ; Vas. iv, 17-18.

39. From 'go'-cow, gotra may have come to mean "a collection of cows." See Vedic Index, i, p. 235

40. Vedic Index, i, 235.

41. Maha Saanti 297, 17-18 says eg.\* Mulagotrani chatv&H

samutpannam Bhadrata/karmato y nyani gotrdni samutpanndni Parthiva /  
ndmadheyani tapasa tani cha grahanam satam / /

The grammarian Pacini has explained gotra as 'the descendants from grandsons onwards' - iv, 1, 162.

42. See foot-note 37, above.

43. Vedic Index, ii, p. 39.

back to the cult of the fire-worship amongst Indo-Aryans. The Purohita (priest), officiating at a sacrifice to Agni } used to recite the names of his famous rishi ancestors when invoking Agni to carry libations to the Gods; therefore, the pravara came to denote the series of such ancestors of the persons who had in former times invoked Agni 44 Now, evidently the list of ancestors has had its social bearings: for, by and by, pravara came to be associated with the various samsforas of domestic and social nature, the most important being the uuiJha ; 45 and it is laid down by some of the authorities that a man shall not marry a woman who can be traced from any of the ancestors as mentioned in his prauara . 46

On the whole, therefore, these exogamic taboos are designed for the restriction of free marital relationship. Their psychological origin lies in the horror of incest and the consequent incest-taboo which aims at preventing sex relations between parents and offsprings, and

44. *ibid.*

45. For some historical details relating to the terms gotra, pravara , see K. Rangachari: Art on <( Gotra and Pravara” in Proc and Trans . of the Third On. Con/, Madras (1924), pp. 635 ff ; C. V. Vaidya : Art. on <{ Gotra and Pravara” in Proc. and Trans . of Ori. Conf. Poona (1919); P. V. Kane: ^ Art on “Gotra and Pravara in Vedic Literature” J.B.B.R.A.S.; New Series Vol. xi, 1-2, Aug. 1935, p 1 ff. None of these, however, have been able to arrive at any satisfactory\* solution of the problem.

46. Eg, Man. G S. i, 7, 8 ; Gaut. iv, 2 ; Vas. viii, 1 ; Yaj. 1, 53. How and why pravara came to be associated with these exogamic rules is almost impossible to ascertain. For apparently there is no connection between gotra which denotes the ancestry of a person, and pravara which denotes the ancestry of some purohita of one of his ancestors. It might be that in those ancient times when the Hindu sacrificer (Yajamdna) acted himself as the priest ( purohita ) reciting the various mantras for himself, he used to invoke Agni by the name of his gotra - rishi as well as by some other ancestors who had attained fame as rishis (venerable sages) ; in that case, the gotra and pravaras are obviously related to each other as being all paternal ancestors of the sacrificer. However, later on when priesthood came to be established and certain experts used to officiate at the sacrifice on behalf of the Yajamdna, it is probable that the officiating priest invoked Agni in the name of his own ancestors, and so these came to be the pravara-rishis for the sacrificer too. The connection between gotra and pravara , once established in the more ancient past when the sacrificer himself used to be the priest, was, however, thoughtlessly supposed to be still holding true, and was allowed to continue,

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between brothers and sisters. The DharmaSdstras have declared that sex relations with mother, or with sisters by the same mother or by the same father, or with the daughter, or with the wife of a son, is a heinous sin (mahd-pdtaka) . 47 The Vishnu Smriti declares that for a person who has committed such a heinous crime, there is no other way of expiation but burning himself by throwing himself into the fire . 48 In the course of time, however, strict adherence to the requirements of all these exogamic laws must have been found so difficult, for one reason or another, that some of the Dharma-Sastras have sought to modify these rules by making them more limited in their operation. Thus, according to these, persons related with each other beyond five degrees on the mother's side and beyond seven degrees on the father's side are allowed to marry . 40

There is no known society which does not restrict man's 'age relations by some kind of exogamic and endogamic rules. In the first place, sex relations between parent and child, – father and daughter, mother and son, – and between brother and sister, are almost universally forbidden ; 50 this restriction is known as the incest taboo. And, in several societies the restriction extends to more remote blood relations. It is not necessary for us to go into the details of whether the incest taboo is based on an instinctive or natural feeling of abhorrence, or is due to social conditioning from early childhood . 51 Suffice it to say that the customs of most of those peoples, who extend the incestuous taboo further than first degree relationship, by several rules of exogamy, reveal that the fear of resulting defective progeny seems to underlie such a prohibition . 62 And the prohibition of consanguinous marriages may be carried to such an excess, as in China and in some parts of India, as to forbid marriage of two persons bearing the same surname . 53

47. Man. xi, 59 ; Yaj. iii, 231 ; Vis. xxxvi, 4-7 ; Gaut. xxi, 1 ; Bau. ii f 2, 13 ; etc.

48. Vis. xxxiv, 1 f. 49. Vis. xxiv, 10 ; Vas. viii, 2 ; Gaut. iv, 3-5.

50. Ogburn, W. F. & Nimkoff, M. F.: A Handbook of Sociology :

Kegan Paul, London, 1947, p. 462 gives some exception to this rule where brother and sister marriages were allowed in some ruling classes.

51 See e.g., Young, K.: Sociology , American Bk. Co, N.Y., Second Ed., 1949, p. 316, and footnote 7 ; Panunzio, C.: Major Social Institutions , Macmillan, 1939, pp. 167-168.

52. Popenoe, P.: Modern Marriage , Macmillan, New York, Second Ed., 1941, p. 103. 53. *ibid.* pp. 103-4.

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The fear of the possible harmful effects of inbreeding if such marriages are freely allowed seems to have, however, a scientific justification based on eugenical considerations . 54 The union of man and women closely related by blood ties is a union of similar hereditary traits, and if the ancestry of the two is good, their offspring will receive, so to speak, a “double dose” of the good traits of their ancestors. At the other extreme, however, if the stock of each carries some undesirable traits or others from their ancestry, the offsprings are likely to be doubly the sufferers for it. But usually it is difficult to trace the ancestral historical details of each family much backwards, and it often happens that some undesirable trait which was latent or recessive, and therefore, was not known in the ancestry now makes itself manifest because of the “double dose” , in the case of consanguineous marriages, e g. feeble mindedness, of which there are instances in the offsprings born of cousin-marriages. And this risk is too great to take. It is in view of such difficulties that it is necessary to take the precaution on the genetic side, of ascertaining the hereditary traits of the parties, to be on the safer side . 541

54. *ibid.*, pp 104-5.

\* See also Panunzio : Major Social Institutions , pp. 167-8. After discussing briefly the different suggested causes or explanations of the exogamic and incest taboo, viz., the magical, the instinctive, the rational, the common-sense, and the social explanation, Panunzio dismisses all of them as unsatisfactory: “None of these explanations is satisfactory : and as in the case of all origins, no valid explanation is available.”

“Endogamy is easily to be explained,” says Dr. K. H. Thouless, “as a result of the tendency of social groups to become segregated. There is, for example, a strong tendency for different social classes and different religious bodies to form endogamous groups within our own culture. Still stronger is the endogamous tendency amongst different racial groups within the same area. Thus the whites and blacks in the U.S.A. and in South Africa remain on the whole sharply distinct groups because there is a strong pressure on the members of each group to choose a mate from inside that group.” “Since all explanations of exogamy must be speculative,” Thouless goes on to observe, “there is no reason why we should not add a new speculation. If members of small groups in a large society choose their mates from within their own small group,



the result will be segregation of each small group into a separate class. Such segregation is a source of weakness to the larger social unit of which these groups are parts. It is clear that exogamy will check this tendency to segregation, and perhaps that is its essential social purpose. .... The greatest disunion in a society through the formation of segre-

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There are other rules, in addition, to exogamy and endogamy, regarding qualifications for fitness to marry, laid down by the Dharma-Sastras. Thus, Manu gives a list of types of families, girls from which should not be accepted for wedlock, even though the families may be ever so great, or rich in kine, horses, sheep, grain or other property . 1 \* These families are:

(1) One which neglects the dharmas , i.e. their personal and social duties and obligations according to the Astras;

(2) One in which the Veda is not studied;

(3) One in which no male child is born;

(4) One, the members of which (a) have thick hair on their body; or (b) are subject to any of the following: hemorrhoids, phthisis, weakness of digestion, epilepsy, and white or black leprosy. 55

The third and fourth types of families have to be avoided due, it is evident, to biological considerations. They suggest that the smritikaras were impressed by the influence of heredity on man. A maiden from a family in which there is a hereditary disease prevalent of the type mentioned above is quite likely to be a victim of that disease herself; and she is sure also to pass it or its tendency on to her progeny.

Similar considerations of the influence of heredity seem to prevail with the smntikdras when they prescribe certain other qualifications for the bride. Thus, a man must not marry a girl with reddish hair, or one who has a redundant or extra bodily limb, or who is sickly, or has no hair or too much hair on the body, nor should he marry one who is garrulous or has red eyes. 56 One must

gated groups would take place if all families became segregated through always marrying their own members. This may be an explanation of

the universality of the prohibition of brother-sister marriage. It also may be an explanation of the occasional relaxation of this prohibition (such as the brother-sister marriage of the Pharaohs), since in a ruling family social segregation is desired.” – R. H. Thouless: *General and Social Psychology*, Univ. Tutorial Press, London, 3rd Ed, 1951, pp. 137-8.

For an excellent discussion on the whole subject of incest taboo and the various explanatory theories of the same, see G. P. Murdock : *Social Structure*, chs. 10 and 11, pp. 285-322 (Macmillan, New York, 1949).

55. Man. iii, 6-7 ; cf. also Yaj. i, 54 ; and Vis. xxiv, 11.

56, Man. fix, 8; cf. Vis. xxiv, 12, 16.

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“not marry a girl who is vicious, unhealthy, of low origin, ill brought-up, talks improperly, inherits some disease from mother or father,

is of masculine appearance has hairy legs, or thick ankles or

led eyes. 57 He must not marry a maiden who has no brother, or whose father is not known; for, in the former case, there is the likelihood of her being made an “appointed daughter”\*; i.e. her son may be adopted by her father, in order to continue his family line, and so, she may remain son-less herself; and in the latter case, there is a likelihood of the young man’s committing the sin of marrying either a sagotrd or a girl bom of illicit union. 58 In short, says Manu, a man should marry a maiden free from any bodily defects, with agreeable name, with the majestic gait of a hamsa or elephant, with a moderate quantity of hair on the body and head, with small teeth and delicate limbs. 59 Vasishtha sums up the directions by saying that the maiden must come of a good family and faultless lineage. 00

Now, even though these precautions and regulations should normally be observed as best as possible, it is recognized that there would be exceptional cases in which there may be an excellent girl (str:~ratna – a jewel of a girl) born in a low family; and in such a case, she should be accepted in marriage by the man, just as a health-giving elixir is acceptable even though it may be prepared out of poisonous ingredients, or gold is acceptable even though it may be available from mud and mire, or superior knowledge acceptable even though it could be had from a man of low position. 61

The qualifications listed above apply on the bridegroom’s side

also, by analogy ( atidesa ). 62 He must not only possess these qualifications, but, in addition, he must be one whose powers of virility are carefully ascertained. 63 And Narada declares that the bridegroom is fit to be married "if his collar-bone, his knee and bones

57. Vishnu Purā. iii, 10.

58. Man. iii, 11 ; cf. Yaj. i, 53.

59. Man. iii, 10 ; says Asv. G.S. 'buddhi-rupa-sila-laksham-sampanndm arogam upayachcheta'.

60. Vas. i, 38.

61. Kautilya in Arthasastra : vishad apyamrutam grahyam , amedhyad api kanchanam, nichdd cipyuttamam vidyam , stri-ratnam dushkuldd api. Also, Man. ii, 238.

62. Yaj. i, 54 : etair eva gunair yuktah.

63. Yaj. i, 35 ; Yatndt parikshitah pumstve.

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are strongly made, if his shoulders and his hair are also strongly made, if the nape of his neck is stout and his thigh and skin strong, and if his gait and voice is full of vigour", 04 the young man has also to undergo an examination with regard to his virility. 05

Vatsyayana takes a similar point of view into consideration with regard to most of the qualifications which he thinks are necessary in the bride-to-be. Thus he advises: "Let him give up a girl who, when the wooers come to woo ( varane ), is found asleep, or in tears, or not at home. Let him also shun these sixteen types: (1) a girl with an uncouth name ( aprajastanamadheya ) , (2) One who has been kept in concealment ( guptd ), (3) One who is betrothed to another man, (4) One with red hair, (5) One with spots on the face, (6) A masculine woman ( rishabha ), (7) One with a big head, (8) A bandy-legged woman ( vikatu ), (9) One with a rather too broad forehead ( vimunda ) , (10) One ceremonially impure ( hichidushita ) , (11) One born of improper marriage ( samkariki ) , (12) One who has menstruated ( rdkd ) , 60 (13) One who is or has been pregnant, (14) An old friend, (15) One who has a younger sister much handsomer than herself, and (16) One that hath a moist hand 67 The girl,

further, must have both of her parents alive; she should be younger than the man by three years at least; she should belong to a family (kula) of good character (sUghydchdra) , of good means and large (dhanavati pakshavati) , with many relatives who are attached to each other with affection ( sambandhipriye sambandhirakule ) .° 3 She should have many relatives both on the father's side as well as on the mother's side. 69 She should possess beauty (rupa) as well as good conduct (iila); and she should be one with auspicious marks on her body (lakshana) . She must have neither more nor less than the proper number of any physical limbs like teeth, nails, ears,

64. Nar. xii, 9.

65. Nar. xii, 8.

66. This probably means one who is just passing through the period of three days menstruation, for Vatsyayana is more liberal than others in his views on marriage. \_

67. Kam. hi, 1, 11-12; Peterson's Tr., xviii, p. 117, cf,

Rati-sastra , viii.

68. Kam. iii, 1, 2.

69. ibid, (prabhuta-mata-pitri-paksham ) .

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hair, eyes and breasts; and must have a healthy constitution free from any disease. 70

Manu does not speak much about the bridegroom's qualifications on the biological side as Yajnavalkya and Narada have done. 71 Vatsyayana, on the other hand, specifically says that the bridegroom also must possess similar qualities described above for the bride; and, in addition, he must have completed his course of studies. 7 -

Vatsyayana shows a truly psychological insight into the prob-

lem, again, when he points out that marriages between persons of unequal social status are not likely to be happy unions. "Social games such as filling up \* bouts rimes', marriages and social intercourse ( samgatam ) generally, should be with a man's equals, not with those either above or below him. A man marries above him ( uchcha-sambandhah ) when he marries a girl only to be treated by her and her friends as a servant ever afterwards; no man of spirit will do that He marries below him ( hina-sambandhah ) when he and his people lord it over the girl; that is a bad marriage; it too is censured by the good". 73 Inequality of social status between the two parties to a marriage union is thus likely in all probability to be a cause of disparity between the relations of the two with each other. True love-union can arise only between social equals. "Where the love between husband and wife adds lustre to both, and where it is a source of joy to families of both, – that is the only type of marriage which is worthy." 74 Vatsyayana adds, however, that in any case, one should at least take precaution not to marry a bride from a status lower than his own. "Let a man marry above him, and walk humbly ever afterwards; but on no account let him do, what all good men disapprove of, viz., marry beneath him." 75

Even though Vatsyayana goes into such details about the principles that should guide the selection of the bride as well as the bridegroom, he seems to be conscious of the fact that it would ordinarily be rather difficult for every person to make a scrutinizing

70. *ibid.*

71. *Yai.* i, 55 ; *Nar.* xu, 16 18 (See *supra*).

72. *Kam.* iii, 1, 2 : *tathavidha eva srutavdn silayet.*

73. *Kam.* iii, 1, 22-24. The Tr. is Peterson's m J B.B.R.A.S., xviii, (1890-94), p. 117,

74. *ibid*, iii, 1, 25.

75. *ibid*, iii, 1, 26.

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search into so many details while making the selection of a bride or

of a bridegroom. He therefore gives one simple test, as if to make up for the possible deficiencies of inadequate information, viz. "He will be a happy husband who marries the woman on whom his heart and eyes are set". 76 He quotes Ghotakamukha on the point as saying that a man should direct his love or attention (pravntti) towards that girl by marrying whom, he feels, he would be satisfied, and would not incur the censure of those in similar social circumstances as his. 77 Or perhaps – which seems to be the more correct interpretation of his view, – Vdtsydyana wants that in addition to the several other qualities in the parties to a marriage, mutual attraction between the two should also be looked upon as an essential condition to bring about the marriage.

Let us now consider the rites and ceremonies { vvdhi ) to be performed at the vvdha . In describing the ceremonies and rituals connected with the vvdha, all the texts concerned refer to the bride as being given away (dana) by the father or her guardian in the family, who invites the bridegroom 78 The bridegroom goes to the bride's home 79 where the vvdha is to take place. The description of these rites, therefore, may be said to refer to the Brahma form of vvdha; and these have come down to us even to this day from ancient times. In this connection, the Asvaldycnia-Grihya-Sutra Rt)

76 *ibid in*, 1, 14-Yasydm manas-chakshushor-nibandhanam tasyam naddhtr netaram adnyeta ityeke.

Peterson, *op. cit*, thinks that Vatsyayana is quoting here from Ap G.S. i, 3, 20

77. Kam. iii, 1, 3: 1 Yam grihlta kntinam atmanam many eta na cha samanair mndyeta tasyam pravnttir iti Ghotakamukha \

78. All these ceremonies are described, e g., in Asv. G.S. i, 7, 1, seq.;

Par. G.S. i, 5, 1, seq. ; Apa. G S. li, 4, 10, seq. ; Gobh. G.S. ii, 1, 13, seq. ; Kha. GS. i, 3, 5, seq. ; etc. 79 Sam GS i 12

80 The different Grihya-Sutras belong to different iakhas (branches) of the Vedas and are followed by the different groups of Hindus according to the sakha to which these groups belong. Thus, e.g., those who belong to the Rigveda – and these predominate – follow the authority (pramana) of the Asvalayana Gnhyia-Sutra for all their samskaras including the vvdha; those belonging to the Apastamha sakha of the Yajurveda follow the Hiranvakesi Grihya-Sutra; those belonging to the Samaveda wouM follow the Gobhila Grihya~Sutra; and so on. In general, however, the main samskaras and the modes of their operation are, in principle, almost the same in all the Grihy a- Svtras.

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tells us that there are, indeed, variations in the observation of wedding rites with peoples of different regions and villages (janapada-dharma grama-dharmascha). However, it proceeds to tell us what is commonly accepted by all . 81 Of these rites, the kanya-ddna , the vivaha-homa, the pani-graha-na, the agni-parinaya'tia , the asmdro-hana 3 the laja-homa, and the saptapadt, each succeed mg m the order given here, are important and involve several implications of a social nature. We now propose to give the salient features of each of these below, m order that these social implications may be properly unfolded:

The first of these is the kanya-dana (ie giving away of the maiden) ceremony performed by the father (or other guardian in his place) ; he pours out a libation of water , 82 symbolizing the giving away of the daughter (dana) to the bridegroom ; 83 the groom accepts ( pratigrinhati ) the gift; he then recites the kdma-sukta (Hymn to Love) verse which runs thus:

Who offered this maiden ?

To whom is she offered ?

Kama \* gave her (to me),

That I may love her.

Yea, Love is the giver,

And Love the acceptor.

Enter thou, (Oh my bride,) the ocean of love.

With love, then,

I receive thee.

May she remain thine,

81. .Asv. GS i, 7, 2: Yattu samanam tad vakshyamah.

82. Aiv. G.S. i, 6, 1, etc.

83. In modern times, all these scriptural rites ( vaidika vidhi) of the vivaha from kanya-dana onwards are preceded by some other rites which are more or less of a customary (laukika) nature. Thus, in

Maharashtra, for instance, all the rites from kanya-dana onwards start after the bride and groom garland each other in the presence of a large gathering invited to witness, or rather, to declare in their presence, that vivaha is to take place between the bride and the groom.

\* i.e. the God of Love.

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Thine own, O God of Love! 8 \*

Verily, thou art, (oh my bride),

Prosperity itself,

May the Heaven bestow thee,

May the Earth receive thee.

Thereafter the father of the bride exhorts the bridegroom not to fail the girl in his pursuit of dharma 9 artha and Lima , 85 and the groom replies, three times, that he shall never fail her m these. so

Next comes the vivdha-homa rite: This requires that, having placed a mill-stone to the West of the fire (which is kindled symbolically as a divine witness and sanctifier of the samskdra), and having deposited a water-pot to the north-east of the fire, the bridegroom has to offer oblations, the bride participating in the offering by grasping the hand (of the groom) that makes the offering . 87 This is followed by the pani-grahana rite (i.e., "holding the hand"); here the bridegroom stands facing the west, while the bride sits in front of him with her face to the east; he now seizes her hand while reciting the following Vedic mantra : 88

I take thy hand in mine,

Yearning for happiness;

I ask thee  
To live with me  
As thy husband,

Till both of us,

With age, grow old.



84. Om ! ka idam kasmd addt , kamah kamayadat, kamo data ,  
kdmah pratigrihita, kdmam samudramavisa, kamena tvd pratigrihnamī,  
kamaitat te/vriṣṭhīrasi f dyaustva dadatu, prithitvi pratigrihndtu/ , etc.  
The mantra is in Taitt. Br. II, ii, 5, 5-6; cf. also Asv. 6rau. 5, 13.

85. l dharme c ha arthe c ha kame cha naticharitavyd tvayeyam

86. \*. . . . Naticharami , ndticharami, natichardmi \*.

87. Asv. G.S. i, 7, 3 ; etc.

88. This seizing of the hand\* is to be done in one of the three ways, according to some Grihya-Sutras : The groom holds the bride's whole hand from the hairside ( romante ) including the thumb if he desires both male and female offsprings; on the other hand, if he desires only male offspring, he seizes the thumb only; while, if he desires female offsprings, he holds her fingers, leaving the thumb free. – See ASv. G.S. i, 7, 3-5, and Apa. G.S. ii, 4, 12, 15.

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Know this,

As I declare,

That the Gods  
Bhaga, Aryama,

Savita and Purandhi  
Have bestowed thy person  
Upon me,

That I may fulfil

My Dharmas of the householder

With thee. 89

This is followed by the U<sup>a</sup>-homa rite in which the bride offers the sacrifice ( homa ) of fried grain, which is poured in her hands by her brother or a person acting in her brother's place ( bhrdtns - thmo va) to the Gods Aryaman, Varuna, Pushan, with Agni as the intercessor on her behalf, in order that these four may be pleased

to release ( munchatu ) her from the bonds (pdsa). 90

After the mantra is recited, the rite of agni-parinayana (i.e. walking around the sacred nuptial fire) follows; here three times the bridegroom leads the bride (trih parinayan) round the nuptial fire and waterpot, keeping their right sides towards both of them ( pradakshinam ) and he reciting the mantra thus:

This I am,

That art thou;

– That indeed, art thou,

This, yea, this I am.

I the heaven,

Thou, the earth;

I the Sdman (i.e. music, song, rhythm),

Thou, then, the Rik, (i.e. the poetry, the verse),  
Let us marry,

Let us marry here. 01

89. Aiv. G.S. i, 7, 3; etc. the mantra is in Rig. x, 85, 36: –  
grihndmi te saubhagatvaya bastam maya patyd jaradashfiryathasa I  
bhago aryama savita purandhirmahyam tvadurgdrhapatyaya devdh/ /  
ct also Ath. Ved. xiv, 1, 50 ; Par. Gr. S. 1, 6.

90. A&s. G.S. i, 7, 8-15 ; etc.

91. \*tavev a vivahavahai\

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Let us join together,

And beget our little ones . 92  
Loving each other , 93

Desirous of moral splendour 94 (or spotless career),

With genial minds and hearts , 95

Thus, yea thus,

May we live

Through a hundred autumns . 96

At the end of each round there is another supplementary rite which is performed by the bride; that is called the atmarohana (mounting the stone). Here, with the helping hand of the groom, she treads on the stone as he recites the following\*

Mount up this stone;

Like a stone

Be firm . 97

Overcome the enemies,

Tread over the foes, –

( – the many difficulties through samsara – ),

Down,

Even as you tread over

This stone . 98

Thereafter, he loosens two locks of her hair ( sikhe ) which have been previously tied, with the mantra:

I release thee, now

From Varuna's bondage (padma) 99

Then follows the most important rite in the whole samskara, viz. the sapta-padi rite (sapta= seven; pada=step) near the nuptial altar; the bridegroom leads the bride for seven steps, in the north-eastern direction; and he recites the relevant part of the following mantra , as they walk each of these steps:

Let us pray together,

92. 'prajam prajanayavahai \ 93. 4 sampriyau \

94. Vochishriu\*. 95. ^ \$umanasyamana'^L , .

96. Asv. GS. i, 7, 6; San. G.S. i, 13, 4. ff.; Par. G.S. 1-6.

97. Asmaiva tvam sthira bhava .

98. Asv. G.S. i, 7, 7; etc. 99. ibid, i, 7, 16-7, etc.

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For life-sap, as we tread one step along,

For life-power, as we tread two steps together,

For wealth more abundant, as we go on three steps with one another,

For happmess in life, as we walk four steps together,

For offsprings, as we move along five steps together,

For a long-wedded-life 100 as we pledge six steps together.

Be thou now my life-mate as we walk up seven steps together.  
Thus do thou go together with me for ever and for ever.

Let us thus acquire many many sons, and long may they live,  
we pray. 101

We may note here that the bride is said to have been given over to the groom by the gods, Bhaga, Aryama, Savita and Purandhi. 102 Some of the Gnhyasutras include another mantra > also taken from the Vedic text, which says that the bride is given over to man by three gods who were her first three husbands, viz., Soma, Gandharva and Agni; the mantra recited before the nuptial fire is: "Soma had acquired thee first as his wife; after him the Gandharva acquired thee, thy third lord was Agni; and, the fourth is thy human husband. Soma has given thee to the Gandharva, the Gandharva gave thee to Agni. Besides thee, O wife, Agni has (as good as) given wealth and children 103 to me". Yajnavalkya is perhaps interpreting this very Rigvedic mantra when he says that the God Soma conferred purity (saucham) upon the woman, Gandharva bestowed upon her a sweet tongue (subham girdm), while

100. The word is 'ritubhyah' literally meaning 'seasons'. But, as expressed in a previous mantra above (jiveva saradah satam) it seems to mean 'long life' here too.

101. Asv. G.S. i, 7, 19: 'isha ekapadyurje dvipadl rayasposhaya tripadi mdyobhavydya chatushpadi, prajdbhyah panchapadi, ritubhyah

shafpadt, sakha saptapadi bhava. sd mamanuvratd bhava , putrunvindd-  
vahai bahunste santu jaradashfaya iti\ etc.

102. See supra . Also, in Man, ix, 95, and Kulluka's commentary thereon,

103. E.g. Far, G.S. i, 4, 16 : The mantras are Rig. x, 85, 39-42 : –  
Vurtah patnim agniradad ayushd saha varchasd/ dirghdyur asya yah  
patir jivati saradah satam / somah pratham vividc gandharvo vivida  
uttarah/tritiyo agnis te patis turiyas te manushyajah/somo' dadad gan-  
dharvaya gandharvo 9 dadad agnaye/rayim cha putrdnschadadagnir  
mahyamatho imam/ /cf, also Ath. Ved. xiv, 1, 47-8.

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Pavaka (i.e. Agm) bestowed upon her perfect purity (sarvame-  
dhyatvam) , 104

After the above vivdha rites are duly carried out at the bnede J s  
parents' home, the wedded couple start out on their journey to the  
bridegroom's home; and this is also to be done ceremoniously and  
with due rites. Tire father's parting words to the bride are the  
following mantra:

"Now from the noose of Varuna, I free thee, wherewith most blessed  
Savitar, hath bound thee.

In the realm of the Right, to the world of virtuous action, I give  
thee up uninjured with thy consort  
Hence (i.e. from the father's house) , and not thence (i e. from the  
husband's house), I set thee free. I make thee softly fet-  
tered there,

That, O bounteous Indra, she may live blest in her fortune and  
her sons." 105

On leaving her parental home, the bridegroom helps the bride  
to mount the vehicle as he repeats the following Vedic mantra :  
"Let Pushan take thy hand and hence conduct thee;

may the two Asvms on their car transport thee.

Go to the house ( griha ) to be the household's mistress (griha-patni) ,  
and speak as Lady to thy gathered people." 100

The nuptial fire is to be constantly carried along with the bridal  
pair during this journey. 107 And agam, when their destination is  
reached, the groom helps the bride to alight down from the car. 108  
Next follows the rite of grihapravesa; (grih a=home; praveta

entry); in this, the groom conducts the bride into the house. 100

104. Yaj. i, 71.

105. Rig. x, 24-25 . pra tv a munchdmi varunasya pasad, yena tvd  
badhnat savita sushevah/ntasya yonau sukrutasya loke' rish\$am tvd  
saha patyd dadhami/preto munchdmi, ndmutah , subaddham amutas  
karam/yatheyam indra miQthvah suputrd sub hag d sati/ / . (The metrical  
tr. in the text is modification of Griffith's)

106. A iv. G.S. i, 8, 1; etc. The mantra is in Rig. i, 85, 26\*— Pushd  
tveto nayatu hastagrihyasvind tvd pravahatan rathena/ gnhdn gachchha  
grihapatni yathdso vasinl tvam vidatham avadasi/ (The tr. in the text  
is slightly modified from Griffith's).

107. Asv. G.S. i, 9, 5: u Vivdhdgnim agrato'jasram nayantV; etc.

108. Asv. G.S. i, 8, 3; etc. 109. Asv. GS. 1, 8, 8, etc.

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The groom's father (or another person m his place) now addresses  
the following benedictory mantras m welcoming the bride:

"Happy be thou and prosper with thy children here;

be vigilant to rule thy household m this home.

Closely unite thy body with this man, thy lord. So shall ye,  
full of years, address your company.

Dwell ye here; be ye not parted; reach the full time of human  
life.

With sons and grandsons, sport and play, rejoicing m your own  
house ." 110

Thereafter, the nuptial fire is established in its proper place  
in the home; and the newly-wedded couple offer oblations to it  
( hutV'j ), when the groom recites these mantras: 111

"So may Prajapati bring children forth to us; may Aryaman  
adorn us till old age. come nigh.

Not inauspicious enter thy husband's house; brmg blessings to our

bipeds and our quadrupeds.

Not evil-eyed, no slayer of thy husband, bring weal to cattle,  
radiant, gentle-hearted.

Loving the Gods, delightful, bearing heroes, bring blessings to  
our quadrupeds and bipeds.

Oh bounteous Indra, make this bride blest in her sons and  
fortunate,

Vouchsafe to her ten sons, and make her husband the eleventh  
man.

Over thy husband's father and thy husband's mother bear full  
sway.

Over the sister of thy lord, over his brother, rule supreme.

So may the Universal Gods, so may the Waters, join our hands,  
May Matarisvan, Dhatar, and Deshtrī together bind us close ." 112

Then follows the rite of looking at the polar star Arundhatī  
at sunset by the bride: Here, the groom shows her the star, known

110. The verses are in Rig x, 85, 27 and 42 :

.... 'iha priyam prajā a te samridhyatam asmin grihe garhapatyaya  
jagrihifena patya, tanvam samsrijasvddhjdjlvrl vidatham avaddthah/ /  
ihaiva stam ma viyaush\$am visvam dyur vyanutam/ /krilantau putrair  
naptribhir modamdnau sve grihe / /cf. also, Ath. Ved. xiv, 1, 22.

111. Mv. G.S. i, 8, 9, etc. 112. Rig. x, 85, 43-47:

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also as dhruva (firm) because of its permanently fixed position in  
the heaven, while he recites the verse:

"Firm ( dhruva ) be thou, thriving with me" 115

After the ceremony of griha-pravesa is thus completed, the  
couple are asked to give up all pungent or saline food, to wear  
ornaments, to sleep only on the floor and observe continence  
(brahma charya), till three nights are over. 114 Vatsyayana says

that after the marriage ceremony is over, the couple should sleep on the ground for three nights and eat food devoid of pungent flavour or salt (kshdra-lavana^^jam); for one week they should take bath to the accompaniment of music and auspicious tunes, put on ornaments, eat together, visit and pay respects to relatives and actors (the latter, perhaps means visits to the theatre to enjoy the stage-performances together) ; – these observances are meant for all the varnas, says Vatsyayana. He quotes the sage Babhravlya (whose name he mentions in the plural to signify the great respect with which the sage is regarded) to say that all this does not mean that the young man should remain speechless like a pillar for three nights with his lady, for in that case he might be taken to be an impotent person and despised by the girl 1 On the contrary, says Vatsyayana, he may make advances of love to her and try to gain her confidence without transgressing continence (brahmachar-

u a nah prajam janayatu prajapatir ajarasdyā sarriānaktvāryama/  
 adurmangalih patilokam avisa san no bhava dvipade sam chatushpade/ /  
 aghorachakshur apatighnyedhi Siva pasubhyah sumanah suvarchasah/  
 virasur devakdma syona san no bhava dvipade sam, chatushpade I /  
 imam tvam mdra midhvah suputram subha gam, krinu/  
 dasasyam putranadhehi patim ekadasam kndhi / /  
 samrdjni svasure bhava samrajnim svasravam bhava/  
 nanandari samrdjni bhava samrdjni adhivnshnu/ f  
 samenjatu visvedevah samapo hridayani nau f  
 i>am matarisva sam dhatd samu deshtri dad/hatu nan II

113. San. G S. i, 17, 3 ; Hir. G S. i, 22, 6 ; Par. G. S. 1, 8, 19 ; Ap. G. S. 2, 6, 12 : Asv. G. S. 1, 7, 22 (According to this last text, this rite is performed before the couple leave the bnde^ father's home); etc.

114. Asv. G. S. x, 8, 10: .

Aksharalavandsinau brahmachdrindvalamkurvandvadhah sayinan

syatam; also San. G.S. i, 18, 19 ; Par. G S. i, 11, 13 ; Go G S. ii, 5 ; Kh. G. S. i, 4, 12 ; Ap. G. S. vin, 8 ; Hir. G. S. i, 6, 23 ; 10



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yam). 115 Asvalayana says that according to some, this period of self-restraint may be extended to twelve days; or it may be as long as even one year, if the couple desire their offspring to be a nshi 116

On the fourth day some rites are performed, preparatory to the meetmg of the newly wedded couple. These rites are the foetus-laying rites; they are not mentioned in all the Grihya-Sutras 117 The husband offers nme expiatory oblations to Agni. ns And, after this sacrifice to Agni is completed, he mates with her while reciting the following mantras : “United are our minds (marais); united our hearts ( hndayani ), united our navel ( nabhih ), united our body and skin (tanu-tvachah) . I will bind thee ( yuj - yami) with the bond of love ( kama ); that bond shall be indissoluble ( avimochandya )”. 119 The husband embraces her while saying the mantra : “Be devoted to me, be my companion”. 120 Thereafter he seeks her mouth with his mouth while he recites these mantras: Honey! Lo! Honey! My tongue's speech is honey; m my mouth dwells the honey of the bee; on my teeth dwells concord. The concord that belongs to chakravdka\* birds, that is brought out of the rivers of which the divine Gandharva is possessed, – thereby we are concordant”. 121 He then prays the Gods Vishnu, Smivall,

115. Kam. ni, 2, 1 8.: sangatayos trirdtram adhah sayya brahma - charyam kshara-lavana-varjam aharas tatha saptaham saturya-mangala snanam prasadhanam saha-bhojanam cha preksha-sambandhmam cha pujanam iti sarvavarnikam. [Yashodhara, in his commentary explains : k\$hdra~phanita-gu<}ddi (jaggery, etc.) ; lavana-saindhavadi (salt, etc.); preksdhsambandhindm natadindm cha darsanam; sangatayoh parinayat prahdsamagamayoh .]

tri-ratram avachannam hi stambham iva nayakam paiyanti kanyd nirvidyeta panbhavet cha tritiyam iva prakritim t iti Babhraviyah / upakramet clyi visrambhayet cha , na tu brahmacharyam ativarteta, iti Vatsyayanah.

116. Asv. G.S. i, 8, 10; cf. Manava GS. i, 14, 14 which says the same thing, without, however, referring to the quality of the offspring resulting out of such penance.

117. They are, e.g , in Hir. G.S. i, 6, 23, 11 to 25, 2, in details ; and in Bau. G.S. i, 7 and Man. G S. i, 14, 1-19 in short.

118. Hir. G.S. i, 6, 23, 11 to 24, 1.

119. Bau. G.S. i, 5, 31 ; Hir. G.S. i, 24, 4. 120. Hir. G.S. i, 7, 25, 5.

♦Mythologically famous for their male and female's strong attachment to each other, 121. Hir. G.S. i, 7, 24, 6.

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Asvins, Agni and Indra, for the birth of a male offspring,— 'the most valiant of his kin'; he also recites the verse: *ft I do with thee the work that is sacred to Prajapati. May an embryo enter thy womb; may a child be bom without any deficiency, with all limbs, not blind, not lame, not sucked out by the Pislchas.* 5122 Tins concludes the ntual part of the sitet-vivaha ceremonies.

These rites and the manner m which they are to be conducted show that mating is regarded as a serious social and personal duty devoid of selfish profligacy or lusty sensual indulgence. Hereafter, the couple start their career as keepers of the home (griha) wherein they do their best to fulfil their vow not to fail each other in their pursuit of dharma , artha , and kdma s for the sake of achieving moksa .\*

The above description of the rites performed at the vivdha must speak for itself. For the Hindu, then, marriage is a samskdra , and as such, the relations between the marrying parties are of a sacramental character, and not a contractual nature. For, apart from the necessity of begetting a son m order to assist the householder in the discharge of his obligations (nnas), it has been ordained by the Dharma-Sastras that the wife is a necessary complement as the grihapatnl (i.e. the lady of the house) for the proper and full execution of his dharmas as the gnha-pati (i.e. the lord of the house). Both the terms patru as well as pati involve the implication of "guardianship" of the home. This is also emphasised by the words which designate one's wife as his dharma-patni and \$aha~dharma-chdrini, i.e. she who has to share all the sacred obligations, and, she who does carry them out m partnership with her husband.

The importance of certain rites in the Hindu vivdha should not fail to secure the attention of a student of the Hindu vivdha system. A marriage is not regarded as complete unless and until certain important rites which are essential for a vivdha are performed. Such are the Pani-grahana y joining of hands of the bride and the bride-groom, and the sapta-padI ("seven steps") mantras. "The mantras of marriage" says BhIshma, "accomplish theii

122. Hir. GS. i, 7, 25, 1.

\* The vow taken by the bridegroom at tftē vivdha :

"Dharme cha arthe cha kame cha natickarami, naticharami, naticharami"  
See p. 165 above, and footnotes 85-86.

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object of bringing about the indissoluble union of marriage at the seventh step. The maiden becomes the wife of him to whom the gift is actually made with water ". 123 Again, "Till the hand is actually taken with due rites, marriage does not happen ". 124 And, the rites of marriage must take place in the presence of sacred fire . 123

Narada has said that once the mantras are recited by joining the hands of the bride and the bridegroom (pam-grahana) , the marriage becomes binding . 120 So also Vasishtha and Baudhayana declare that a damsel who is not wedded in accompaniment with sacred rites may be deemed even as a maiden, and she may be lawfully given to another man . 127 "The nuptial mantras including those of u pamgrahana " says Manu, "are a certain proof that a maiden has been made a lawful wife; but the learned should observe that they are complete with the seventh step ." 128

Utsyayana too has attached great importance to the sacred rites performed in the wedding. He gives an advice of caution, for instance, that in the Gindharva vivdha the nuptials may have to be secretly performed, yet they have to be performed before the sacred fire; and, this fire is brought from the house of a Srotrīya i.e. a gentleman who has been regularly observing his sacred duties; kusa grass is spread before it; and oblations are offered in such a fire according to the rules of the Smṛiti ( yathā-smṛiti) , 129 The couple is then to go thrice round the fire . 130 The reason for this precaution to perform the rites before the fire is, that marriages performed with the fire as the witness are binding and can never be set aside . 131

In the opinion of Kautilya, the rejection of a bride before the

123. Maha Anu. 44, 55.

124. *ibid.* 44, 35.

125. *ibid.* 44, 56

126. *Nar.* xn, 3

127. *Vas.* xvn, 73 ; *Baudh.* iv, 1, 15.

128 *Man.* viii, 227 : c pdmgrahanika mantra niyatam dara^lakshariam { tesham tu mshtha vijneya vidvadbhih saptame pade/\ Both Medhatithi and Kulluka, commenting on this verse, explain that this means marriage cannot be revoked or annulled after the seventh step is taken.

129. *Kama*, iii, 5, 11.

130. *ibid.*

131. *Kama*, iii, 5, 13.

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rites of pdm-grahana is valid amongst the higher varnas . Among the Sudras, however, the rejection is valid at any tmie before the last rite of the nuptials. But rejection of the bride even after the pdni-grahana rite is permitted m the case of a bnide whose guilt of having lam with another man has been discovered afterwards. However, rejection of the bride after pdni-grahana can never be allowed in the case of brides and bridegrooms of pure character and high family . 132

Now, while Manu regards the first six forms, out of the list already mentioned, as lawful, he gives his particular approval to the Gdndharva and the Kakshasa vivdha forms in the case of the warrior varna, i.e., the Kshatriyas, as being permitted by the time-honoured tradition . 133 Baudayana observes that of all the forms, the Gdndharva form is recommended by some since it springs out of mutual love of the two parties . 134 Both Baudhayana and Narada say that this form is meant for all the varnas . 1 \* 1 The *Kama Sutras* have also specially recommended the gdndharva form of vivdha as being the most respected form of marriage; because says Vatsyayana, it is the result of mutual love; and, he adds, mutual love is the true foundation as well as the true goal of marriage 13G

In the Mahdbhdrata, out of the eight forms of marriage, the Brahma , Daiva, Arsha and Prdjdpatna forms of vivdha are said to be permissbile for the Brahmanas , 137 and the Gdndharva and the P^kshasa forms are viewed as proper for the Kshatnya At another place, Bhllshma says that the Brahma form is followed by the righteous Bramanas, and Kshdtra form by the Kshatriyas , 130 but when referring to the Gdndharva form as one m which “the father of the gihl, without consulting his own wishes, gives away his daughter to a person whom the daughter likes and who recipro-

132. Arth. p. 212.

133. Man, iii, 26. “gandharvo rakckasas chaiva dharmyau kskatrasya tau smritau/”.

134. Nar. xn, 44; Eaudh. i, 11, 20, 16 also says ‘gandharvam apyeke prasamsanti sarveshdm , snehanugatvat /

135. ibid.

136. Kam. iii, 5, 29-30.

137. Like Manu iii, 24, above.

138. Maha Adi 73, 8-13 ; also 73, 27.

139. ibid. 44, 4, 5.

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cates her sentiments”, Bhllshma does not make mention of any varna in particular 140 as the Smntis mentioned above have done. Indeed, he says m a further passage in the same Adhydya “the Brahma , Kshdtra and Gdndharva forms are righteous ( dharmyah ) ; pure or mixed, these forms forsooth should be followed.” 141

The Artha-Sastra has not said much about this point, and we naturally cannot expect much from it either, smce its mam concern is the science of government and politics. It permits, m the first instance, the first four forms as ancestral custom, valid on the father’s approval. It also permits the other forms, provided the

sanction of both the parents is obtained. Ordinarily, according to the Artha-Sastra , “any kind of marriage is approvable provided it pleases all those (that are concerned in it) .” 142

In the Mahdbhdrata, we have just seen how the Gandham'a form is defined. 143 The father or the guardian of the girl gives her m marriage in this form in accordance with her wishes, and to a man of her choice. But, it should be noted here, that this passage still visualizes that ultimately, it is the father (or the guardian), who has to give the girl in marriage, though this is to be done in accordance with her own wishes, not his. The passage does not refer to a marriage arranged by the girl and the boy themselves. In another passage greater credence is given to the marriage by the mutual choice of the two parties than even to the engagement made by the bride's father to a man of his choice. “The engagement made by the relatives of a girl is, no doubt binding and sacred; but the engagement fixed by the bride and the bridegroom with the help of mantras is much more so.” 144

140. *ibid.* 44, 6: Atmabhipretam utsrija kanydbhipreta eva yat/ abhipretd cha yd yasya tasmai deya Yudhishtira/gdndharvam iti tam dharmam prahur vedavido janah//

141. *ibid.* 44, 10 : “Brdhmah kshatro'tha gdndharva ete dharmya nararshabha/prithag vd yadi va misrah kartavya natra samsayah// f \ The ‘mixtures’ of these forms are illustrated by the marriages of Nala-Damayanti, which is a Brahma-Kshatra marriage ; of Rukmini-Krishna which is a Rakshasa-Gandharva marriage ; and of Subhadra-Arjuna, Which is a Kshatra-Rdkshasa marriage. Com m. of Nllakantha.

142. *Arth.* p. 172.

143. See above and footnote 138.

144. *Maha. Anu.* 44, 26.

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In Vatsyayana's book, there are good many references to courtship between the maiden and her young man. Of course, “All the world knows”, according to Vatsyayana, “that a girl however much she may be in love, will not herself make any overtures to the man ”. 145 The whole skill, therefore, m courtship and winning over the love of a maiden rests with her lover.

Vatsyayana gives many shrewd hints to the suitor in order to enable him to accomplish his heart's desire; and, in these matters, he seems to take a very progressive view of things: The suitor may, for instance, collect flowers and make garlands of these in company of and with the help of his lady-love; or, he may play some indoor games with her (like the game of dice, for example), all such things are to be practised having regard to their age and their degree of acquaintance with each other. 146 Or, the lover is advised to seek their help and guidance for the fulfilment of his quest. 147 He is asked to spare no pains to please her by securing for her (prayatnena sampaddayeta) rare novel articles (a purvdm) which she might desire to have. 148 The Gandharva vivaha, as the sage Vatsyayana envisages it, should be the flowering of such courtship. The young man, after persuading his beloved to be his bride and life-mate, is advised to arrange, through the help of mutual friends, the time and the place for the two to meet together and sanctify their love in the presence of the sacred fire. 149 The two lovers should then go round the fire thrice, with due rites of oblations in accordance with the rules laid down by the Smritis. 150 For "marriages performed with the sacred fire as the witness can never be rescinded" – this is the opinion of all Acharyas. 151 After all this has been accomplished in secret, however, the parents have to be appraised of the happy event. 152 The parents and the relatives may then be won over by the lovers; when their consent is obtained,

145. Kam (tr. by Peterson) : BBRAtS. Jour., Vol. xviii, pp. 117-18.

146. Kam iii, 3, 5, ( parichayasya vayasaschanurupat).

147. ibid, in, 3, 8-9.

148. ibid, iii, 3, 11-12. 149 ibid iii, 5, 11.

150. ibid. (Yathdsmriti hutva cha tñh pankramet).

151. ibid, iii, 5, 13 : " Agnisdkshika hi vivaha na nivartanta iti achdryasamayah"

152. Kam. in, 5, 12. 'tato matan pitari cha prakdsayet\ etc

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the formal marriage ceremonies are advised to be performed . 15,1  
Such is the Gandharva vivaha according to Vatsyayana. In case  
the girl hesitates to take to this course of action ( aprati-padyama -  
7 ia) t it is advised that she may be brought to a secret place on  
some pretext {anyakaryopadesena) with the help of another lady  
of good family, (of course, provided she is in love with the man,  
but is hesitant to marry secretly); here the rites before the sacred  
fire should then be performed. Or, the young man is advised to  
persuade the mother of the girl, or her brother, and with his or  
her help, to get the girl at a secret place where, with due rites as  
described above, the wedding should be effected . 154 According to  
Vatsyayana, the Gandharva form of marriage is the most respected  
(pujita) form of marriage, because, in the first place, it is founded  
on mutual love, and secondly, because love is the be-all and end-all  
of marriage ; 155 moreover, it is free from any cumbersome formalities  
and trouble . 136

The most emphatically denounced form of marriage is that in  
which money is paid to the bride or her kinsmen, as the bride-  
price or dowry. Selling the daughter even for the smallest  
gratuity, is agamst all morals 157 The Mahdbhdrata is quite clear  
on this point. According to Bhishma, the sale and purchase of the  
daughter, though known to be practised by a few human beings for  
a long time, should never be done by good men . 138 “No one should  
give his daughter to such a person (who offers money for the bride);  
in fact, he is not the man with whom one may marry his  
daughter. A wife should never be purchased; nor should a father  
ever sell his daughter .” 159 Such money, agam, if paid by a person  
for buying a girl, need not bind her father or kinsmen to give the  
girl to him only. “The kinsmen of the maiden should bestow her  
upon him whom they consider proper. There need be no hesitation

153. *ibid.* 154. Kam. lii, 5, 18-19.

155. Kam. iii, 5, 20-23 :

c Vyuqlhanam hi vivahanam anuragah phalam yatah . , and  
f . . . anuragatmakattvachcha gnddharvah pravaro matah\

156. *ibid.*, ‘sukhatvad abahuklesaf.

157. Man. iii, 51 ; Ap. ii, 13, 11 ; Vas. i, 37-38 ; Baudh. i, 21, 2-3 ;  
Ma ha. TJdyoga. 97, 15-16.

158. Maha. Anu. 44, 37.

159. *ibid.* 44, 46 ; cf. Man. iii, 51-52.



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to do such a thing (ndtrci hary'i mchdrand) ; the righteous act thus without caring for the giver of the money even if he be alive ". 100 Continuous sufferings in hell will be the punishment for the man who sells either his son or daughter . 161 We are further told that "In the form of marriage called Arsha } the man who marries has to give a bull and a cow; and the father of the maiden accepts the gift ." 102 Some characterise this gift as a purchase price (Uulka). while others are of opinion that it should not be considered as such. The true view, however, is that a gift for such a purpose, be it of small value or large, should be considered as price, and the bestowal of the daughter under such circumstances should be considered a sale . 165 And, in spite of the fact of its having been practised by a few persons, it can never be taken as the traditional dharma practice ( naisha dharmah sandtanah) , 164 Even a human being who is not a relation of blood should never be sold, what need then be said of one's own child? No dharma can ever be served with the riches acquired by doing such acts against the dictates of dharma , 165

Regarding the age of marriage of a girl or a boy, there is a great variety of opinions among the Hindu writers; and it is extremely difficult to say anything specific and uniform about their general opinion. The only thing which they agree about is that the age of the bride must be less than that of the boy. And, even to this day, a contrary instance of marriage in which the boy is younger than the girl may be hard to find among the Hindus. Manu has said, for instance, that a man of thirty should marry a girl of twelve; and, a man of twenty-four should marry a girl of eight . 166 Manu's commentators Medhatithi and Kulluka inform us that this rule was not followed to the letter. In the Mahabharata at one place we find Bhishma, while explaining to Yudhishtira about vivaha , saying that "A person of thirty years of age should

180 *ibid.* 44, 50-51. 161. *ibid.* 45, 19.

162. *ibid* 45, 20 ; See Manu. iii, 29.

163 Maha. Anu. 45, 20 : u Alpo va bahu va rdjan vikrayas tavad eva sab." Also in Manu iii, 53.

164 Maha Anu 45, 21.

165. *ibid.* 45, 23 \* "Anyo'pyatha na vikreya manushvah kim punah

prajah/adharma-mulair hi dhanais tair na dharmo katham cha na/”

166. Man. ix, 94.

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marry a girl of ten years of age wearing a smgle piece of cloth. Or a person of one and twenty years of age should marry a girl of seven years of age.” 167 Of course, at other places, it advocates sixteen years as the age for a girl to marry (see below). All agree upon one pomt, viz., that the bride must be younger by three years or more than the husband. 168 Vatsyayana also says that the bride must be at least three years younger than the bridegroom. 169

In the Grihya Sutras, the marriageable maiden is referred to as a nagnikd . 17 ° And Dr. Ghosh has pointed out in this connection, that Matridatta’s commentary on this word explains it as referring to a girl who is fit to be undressed (from nagna= undressed) in privacy with her husband for cohabitation and therefore is one who has attamed perfect maturity. 171 “ Nagnikd , therefore”, in Dr. Ghoshs opinion, “in ancient times meant a young but mature girl. It is difficult to believe that nagnikd meant a naked girl (i.e. a child too young to put on clothes) having regard to the fact that the Mahdbhdrata advocates the marriage of a nagnikd of sixteen”! 172 Further, we may note that the Grihya - Sutra rules about the observance of brahmacharya hy the couple for three days after vivdha and of co-habitation on the fourth, 173 positively assume ^ mature age of marriage, both for the bridegroom as well as the bride.

In Vatsyayana’s Kama-Sutra, we have a description of the various ways and means employed by wooers to win over young maidens for marriage by showing their skill in the various arts or by giving attractive presents to them. 174 There are also references, in these sutras, of various other means on a more romantic level; for instance, lovers sent messages and love-letters to each other through persons in whom both the lovers could repose their full confidence; or friends of one party praised the virtues and attainments of the lover to the beloved or deprecated and found faults

167. Maha. Ami. 44, 14.

168. Gaut. iv ; Yaj. i, 52 ; Man. iii, 4, 12 ; Apa. ii, 6, 13, 1 ; etc.

169. Kam. iii, 1, 2 : – ( tnvarshat prabhriti nyunavayasam) .

170. Gobhi. Gr. S. iii, 4, 6 ; Man. Gr, i, 7 ; Hira#yakesi Gri. i, 19, 2 ;  
Vaikha. Gr. iii. 2, 1 ; etc.

171. Tasmad vastra-vikshepanarha nagnikd maithundrhd iti arthah,

172. Ghosh : Hindu haw of Partition , p. 707.

173. See sttpro, pp. 24-25 above. 174. Kam. iii.

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with any other possible suitor, in the interest of the one whom they  
praised. 175

Yet it is very difficult to define the attitude of Vatsyayana's  
Kdma-Sutra regarding the age of the bride, in spite of the fact that  
it is a text which concerns itself with problems of sexual psychology  
and morality rather in details. For, even while talking about  
a young man's courtship to the maiden (kanyd), he refers to a  
Bald (child), as well as a Yauvane-sthitd (adolescent) and a  
Vatsald (adult) \* A bald may be won over by plays and games be-  
fitting a very young person (bdla-kridanakair) ; an adult damsel  
(yauvane-sthitd) may be courted by demonstration of skill in  
various arts ( kaldbhih ) ; while a vatsald , – by which may be implied  
a lady of more advanced years, who is capable of offering love  
( vatsalam ) herself – may be solicited by winning the confidence of  
persons in whom the lady puts her faith (vtivasya-jana) . 17C But  
in the description which he gives of the girl who has fallen in love  
with her suitor as a result of his enthusiastic and untiring efforts,  
he seems evidently to pre-suppose the young maiden to have attain-  
ed a fairly mature age. Thus, he gives certain signs (lakshandni)  
from which her love for a man may be suspected and ascertained:  
The lady who has fallen in love avoids looking straight in the face  
of her lover ( sanmukham ) ; or she shows signs of bashfulness when  
he looks at her. 177 Further on, Vatsyayana gives a piece of advice  
to the young maiden that she should choose the man who would  
truly love her, rather than a man endowed with many virtues or  
riches. 178 "Out of many suitors of equal merits (gunasdmeyebhiyok~

175. Kam. iii, 2 ; 3 ; 5 ; etc.

\*In the Ratisastra, the following terms are referred to, and explained

thus : "A maiden is called bald till she attains the sixteenth year of her age ; she is known as a taruni till she attains the thirtieth year ; thereafter, till the age of fifty-five, she is called a prau\$ha ; while after the fifty-fifth year of age, she becomes a vriddha- Ch. iv. The author goes on further to describe different ways of courtship of these girls, similar as the above of the Kamasutra. 176. Kam. iii, 3, 43-44.

177. Kam. iii, 3, 25 ; cf. 1 Rati-ṣastra\ ch. vi.

178. ibid, iii, 4, 52 and 55 : -

'Kanyabhiyuj yamdna tu yam manyetdsrayam sukham /  
anukulam cha vasyam cha tasya kuryat parigraham/ /  
va ram vasyo daridro'pi nirguno 1 pydtmadhdraiah/  
gunairyukto'pi na tvendm bahusddhdrano patih/ /\*

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trtnam ), choose him", the sage advises, "who is in love with thee ( anurdgatmakah ) ". 179

On the whole, we may say, that Vatsyayana does not seem to have been in favour of child-marriages; for he refers to the bride as prd'pta-yauvand (pr<jpta===attamed; yauvana= youth) and vigadha-yauvand ( vigadha – mature). His description of Gdndharva form of marriage as a highly respected one, of the love-letters exchanged between the wooer and the wooed, and of the methods to be employed in courtmg love, perhaps too clearly demonstrate that he was all in favour of mature marriages. In the epics, and in the Smritis, the prescribed age of marriage is very low, as will be seen below. The important factor governing the prescription of marriageable age is of course the age of puberty – which is, according; to modern scientists, between about twelve to sixteen for girls and between about fourteen to eighteen for boys . 18 ' 0 However, the permissible age according to law is not the actual age at which every marriage takes place, the latter is usually higher than the former . 181 This fact should always be borne in mind when we consider the legislation on the age of marriage.

In the Mahdbhdrata as well as in the Smritis again (even though these prescribe, sometimes, very low age for girls to marry') , there are many indications to show that, in fact, the actual age of marriage must have been higher. The various duties prescribed for the housewife in the Smritis, as well as in the Sukra-Niti, for instance, are such as could not be performed by too young a girl . 1 82

Of course this does not give a strong evidence in favour of the position that Smritis too expected complete maturity of body and mind in marriageable girls; for the duties may have as well been intended, not for the newly married bride, but for the wife after she has attained maturity of age and intellect in her husband's home. The Mahabharata, on the other hand, gives numerous actual instances where the bride-to-be was maiden, who had attained an adequate physical as well as intellectual status deemed necessary for starting married life. The marriages of Dushysanta and Sakuntala,

179. *ibid*, iii, 4, 59.

180. Goodsell, W. : History of Marriage and Family, Macmillan 1934, pp. 63-64 – cited by Panunzio : Major Social Institutions, p. 154.

181. Panunzio : *op. cit.* p. 157.

182. See next chapter.

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Savitri and Satyawana, Subhadra and Arjuna, Rukmini and Krishna, Nala and Damayanti, to mention some only are all marriages where the maiden, out of love, married the man of her own free choice. In the Svayam-vara (svayam – self; vara from *un-choose*)\* of the Epics the bride very often made a selection out of several suitors for her hand. There are also several instances in the dramatic and the poetic literature regarding such choosing by the bride of her own husband; for instance, Bana's Kadambari depicting the romances of two pairs of lovers, viz. Kadambari-Chandrapada, and Mahasveta-Pundarikā; and the dramas Malati-Madhavam, Vitrakarna, and Sakuntalam, give rich and vivid descriptions of such happenings.

In connection with the age of marriageability for boys and girls, it should be observed here that a life of sex-experience at too early an age has been found to be harmful to the development of the personality, – physical and intellectual, – of the male as well as the female. It is equally harmful to start sex-life too late. Hamilton and McGowan have shown, for instance, that sexual frigidity of later life in women is due mostly to repressions during childhood, as also to lateness of sexual experience. Therefore, in their opinion, "Early sexual experience is valuable to the mental health and the marital normality and happiness of women".<sup>188</sup> If proper precautions are taken, early marriages, – by which is not meant child marriages, but marriages at a fairly mature age yet not much later –

are bound to be happier, both from the point of view of psychological as well as physical compatibility of the partners concerned. Apart from the absence of repressed morbidity already mentioned above, there is a positive advantage of a psychological nature in early marriages. The likes and dislikes and the general mental attitude of men and women become more and more formed and fixed as the individuals advance in age, so that there is often little or no room left for mutual give and take, mutual adjustments and psychological

\* It may be pointed out here that the term svayam-vara was not always used in its strict meaning of the "individual's own choice" entirely, but in a qualified way. It often meant that the father, or the guardian, did not choose the bridegroom for his daughter, but laid down some difficult test or contest to be passed or won as a qualification for gaining the hand of the daughter.

183. Ch. on "Physical Disabilities in Wives", in "Sex in Civilization", Ed. by Calverton & Sehmalhausen, pp. 235-36.

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compatibility of a couple which happens to come together at a rather late age. On the other hand, psychological compatibility between the two is certainly more possible and highly probable, if they come together at an age when their mental attitudes are not yet finally formed and hardened but are rather pliable, flexible and mobile in regard to mutual adjustment, so that there is likely to be little room for serious conflicts between the two who become pledged to live together for life. Thus, the problems of the adaptation to each other's tastes, conduct and attitudes are likely to be obviously easier for solution at an early age than later in life. In the words of Williams, "the case for early marriage, from the psychological point of view, lies in the fact that, if married early, the nature of each is still plastic, and there is a greater possibility of congeniality than later when the characteristic attitudes have become fixed". 184

"On the other hand", however, he proceeds to say, "if marriage is delayed until the character is formed, then both the man and woman are more sure of what their natures are and of the kind of person with whom they will be congenial". 185 But then, even if the adult man or woman reaches the age when his or her character is fixed and when he or she has attained the maturity of judgment to know the kind of person who should be chosen as the life-mate, such persons cannot be said to be free from the dangers of mis-

judgment and even folly. For, the courtship of the adult need not and in fact in many cases, does not, lead to a really .congenial choice of mate. The period of courtship is more or less full of excitement and thrill; so that there is little room for real reflexion and calm and balanced observation. During the period of courtship, when living together is not possible, each is apt to be attracted to the other by favourable points of consideration; this increases the likelihood that each may even overlook or be blinded to the unfavourable ones. In fact, the emotional situations involved in courtship must leave little room for the judicial exercise of wisdom and reason. "The thrills of courtship prove little as to the wisdom of courtship ". 186

But there is more to be said still about a happy marriage:

184, Williams : Prin. Soc . Psy. t p. 288.

185, Williams : Prin . Soc. Psy., p. 288.

186, Williams : ibid. p. 290.

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What is essentially required for happiness in wedded life is not so much wise or judicious choice, or agreement of temperament; it is much more the attitude of mind towards avoidance of strife, an attitude not to magnify minor differences, a willingness to give and take, to seek harmony and to adapt. The two partners are going to face, after marriage, any number of new situations which were unforeseen, un-anticipated by them, requiring on their part constant efforts at mutual adjustment and compromise of attitude and outlook. "I had never thought you would be or do so-and-so when I married you ..." and so on . . . is a common complaint between couples who do not find themselves able to adjust their selves to each other.

Panunzio has very well pointed out the advantages and disadvantages of parental guidance or parental choice of the mate, and spontaneous choice of the mate by the parties themselves: 157 "Spontaneous mate choosing has its advantages. It places mating above the economic or social calculations of parents or other relatives, who ordinarily tend to consider their interests first; it gives some measure of self-expression to the choosers and lends greater beauty and romance to mating; and it is free and adventurous.

“On the other hand, spontaneous mate choosing seems disadvantageous in some respects. It is, first of all, scarcely choosing at all. Youthful individuals tend to be drawn to each other by mere accidental propinquity; they do not primarily think but feel, they do not or cannot look ahead; they fail to consider whether they are physically or emotionally fit for one another; often they either do not perceive or ignore their differences in race and culture, in personal habits, in aptitudes, in educational and religious training, and in political background. Consequently, their choice, in so far as they do choose, is largely non-deliberative. In reality they do not choose at all, but merely “fall” in love, and often the fall mars their whole lives. In addition, spontaneous mate choosing mainly being emotional, tends to build the romantic figment of “perfection” which often adds to the likelihood of failure in marriage. Perfect or nearly perfect marriages have been known, e g., that of Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett and that described in *An American Idyl* . But these are rare, very rare. Romantic

187. C. Panunzio : *Major Social Institutions* , p. 180.

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marriages in which no account is taken of biological and cultural differences and in which practically no preparation has been made for the slow never ending process of adjustment, seem to have a greater probability of failure.

“Although scientific data are not available for a sound generalization, it may be asserted that, all in all, spontaneous mate choosing does not provide a sufficient degree of control of the sex impulse or of guidance in choice. This form of choosing may partly account for the disorganization in marriage, as evidenced in the number of divorces, prevailing in parts of Western culture, particularly in democratic nations. Marriage, even at its best, calls for a profound adjustment; man and woman are in many respects natively so different that when to normal, inherent male-female differences, non-rational selection adds other elements of possible discord, marriage becomes so complex as frequently to be doomed to failure from the outset”.

It seems fair, therefore, to conclude from what has been said so far, that in deciding the marriageable age for boys and girls, the chief point to remember is that too late marriages are likely to



be as harmful as, or even more harmful than, too early marriages. This is not to say that we are in favour of infant and child marriages. It is only intended to point out that the sponsors of late marriages will have to pause and think over and answer the same difficulties, plus a few more in all probability, before advocating a late age-limit of marriage. And, the question to be answered also is: How late is not too late to marry!

Further, marriage must also be looked upon for the married couple as the first major field of practising the lessons of individual and social adjustment through a series of mutual contacts, and also of contacts jointly as partners in a variety of activities and dealings with others in the family and outside the family. Panunzio even thinks that "It is not unlikely that a greater amount of socialization and accommodation occurs in and through marriage than in or through any other institution". 188

Though we do not have as yet adequate scientific data on the question, the specialists in the subject seem to be generally agreed upon the advisability of comparatively early – not too early – mar-

188. C. Panunzio : Major Social Institutions , p. 180.

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riage. Such marriage is advantageous in their view, from the individual bio-psychological as well as from the social point of view. Thus, it has been pointed out that "after a girl is 18 or 20, an early marriage tends to remove the emotional strain of celibacy which, if prolonged, may distort her personahy. A younger woman has a wider choice of men and therefore is more likely to secure a suitable mate, making it easier for younger couples to adjust themselves to one another in the marriage state. Judges and divorce lawyers have noted less frequency of divorce in early marriages than m the late ones." 189

The man who marries in the early twenties, 390 has, from the practical pomt of view, several other advantages too: By beginning married life earlier, he would be able to get more happiness; by giving full expression to his emotional and physical urges at the right time without having to suppress them, he is able to lead a more healthful life, and is therefore likely to live longer. "It is widely alleged that early marriages are not so likely to be happy. This is one of those glib generalizations that is passed around solemnly until it comes to be taken as a gospel truth. There is no

real basis for it, when one comes to study the record. . . . The important factor is the quality of the people who are marrying, not their age". 391 In view of this, Paul Popenoe\* suggests the following broad "formula" for marriage, on the basis of his specialised studies and data: "People should marry after they are physically mature, after they are emotionally mature, and before they are intellectually mature", 192 and this is in the early twenties which, in his judgment, is the normal time for marriage. 198

189. Paul Popenoe : Modern Marriage, Macmillan, N.Y. 1925, p. 50.

190. Paul Popenoe : Modern Marriage , 2nd Rev. Ed., Macmillan, 1941, p. 10.

191. *ibid.* pp. 13-14.

\* Dr. Paul Popenoe, of the University of Southern California, U.S.A., is the General Director of the American Institute of Family Relations, Los Angeles, California, and is the author of Modern Marriage (1925, New Ed. 1940), The Child's Heredity (1929), Applied Eugenics (2nd Ed. 1937), and other books and a number of research articles on the subject of marriage and family.

192. *ibid.* p. 14.

193. *ibid.*

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The problems of marital happiness and also of family welfare are now engaging the serious attention of the Universities and also other organisations in the U.S.A. and other advanced parts of the world, with the result that there have been established a number of family welfare centers and also independent departments for the subjects in some of the Universities there. Of the investigations that have been recently made in the field of marital happiness there by collecting actual data from married couples and treating it scientifically by statistical and other methods, the following may be mentioned as the most important, viz., - L. M. Terman: Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1939); and E. W. Burgess & L. S. Cottrell, Jr.: Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage (Prentice-Hall, New York, 1939). The findings of these investigators agree largely with each other, and, though these studies were made in the American context, our read-

ers may find them interesting in this connection, and hence the following brief note on them is added:

Terman's study was made on a sample of 792 couples of California and he also had the co-operation, counsel and/or advice from Dr. Burgess, Dr. Popenoe, and others. His conclusion is that the ten background circumstances most predictive of marital happiness are: (1) Superior happiness of parents, (2) childhood happiness of the spouses, (3) lack of conflict with mother, (4) home discipline that was firm without being harsh, (5 & 6) strong

attachment to mother and to father, (7) lack of conflict with father, (8) parental frankness about matters of sex, (9) infrequency and mildness of childhood punishment, and (10) premarital attitude towards sex that was free from disgust or aversion (Terman, Op. cit. p. 372).

Burgess and Cottrell begin by observing that in the oriental countries 'the entire course of selection of mates, marriage, and marital adjustment is regulated by Oriental mores with a minimum of personal freedom and initiative and a maximum of familial and social control'. On the other hand, "In American society, the mores ensure a maximum of personal freedom in courtship, engagement, and marriage ..." (Op. Cit. pp. 43-4). In their investigation, they found that among the several pre-marital factors which show a rather high positive correlation with adjustment in marriage are: approval of marriage by the parents of the couple; similarity of

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their family backgrounds; husband and wife not only children; husband closely attached to, and having little or no conflict with, his father and mother; wife's close attachment to mother, husband and wife reared in the country; church attendance by husband two or more times a month; couple acquainted with each other two or more years; husband and wife 22 to 30 years old at time of marriage; couple married by priest or rabbi. (Op cit. pp. 354). There are other factors also mentioned by the authors which correlate highly with marital happiness, which the reader should see for himself from the work.

The authors also make the following observations on the basis of their study (p. 349): (1) Contrary to prevailing opinion, American wives make major adjustment in marriage. (2) Affectional relationships in childhood, typically of the son for the mother and

the daughter for the father, condition the love-object choice of the adult. (3) The socialization of the person, as indicated by his participation in social life and social institutions, is significant for adjustment in marriage. (4) The economic factor in itself is not significant for adjustment in marriage, since it is apparently fully accounted for by the other factors (impression of cultural background, psychogenetic characteristics, social type, and response patterns). (5) With the majority of couples, problems of sexual adjustment in marriage appear to be a resultant not so much of biological factors as of psychological characteristics and of cultural conditioning of attitude towards sex. (*Italics ours.*)

In a later paper, Dr. Burgess (who, as Prof. Christensen remarks, "is pioneer and Dean in the field of family research") observes that "new findings are becoming available upon the factors which make for success in modern marriage. These may be briefly summed up: (1) the possession of personality traits such as an optimistic temperament, emotional balance, yielding disposition, sympathetic attitude, self-confidence, particularly on the part of the husband, and emotional dependence; (2) similarity of cultural backgrounds; (3) a harmonious and understanding family environ-

191 Burgess, I. W. : "Research", from a symposium entitled "New Foundations for Marriage and Family", in *Marriage and Family Living*, Sumner, 1946, pp. 64-5, - quoted by Christensen, H. T. : *Marriage Analysis*, Ronald Press, New York, 1950, pp. 166-7.

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ment, (4) a socialized personality as evidenced by number of friends, participation in organizations, educational level; (5) the keeping up of religious observances; (6) an occupation with moderate economic status, superior education, high degree of social control, reasonable security and little or no mobility; (7) a love relationship growing out of companionship rather than infatuation; and (8) wholesome growth of attitude towards sex and similarity in strength of sex desire of husband and wife.

Concealment of the defects of the bride by her father or her kinsmen is a highly punishable offence. 15 \* 5 Once, however, the defects or blemishes of the bride are openly declared before marriage, the kinsmen are not liable to any punishment even if the defect consists of such serious disease as leprosy, or such serious blemish as loss of virginity (spnsh:amaithuna), 190 If, however, the husband

discovers such disease or loss of chastity in the bride after the marriage, and these were not disclosed to him before, he may abandon her. 197 Nay, even the whole agreement of marriage may be annulled, if the girl possesses blemishes which were not declared before. 19 ^ According to Narada, if any concealed defects in the husband were disclosed after marriage to the woman, who is herself faultless, such marriage also could be dissolved. 199

Kauulya says that the person who marries a girl without declaring his own blemishes shall be punished not only with double the fine imposable upon the father or other kinsmen of the bride for a similar offence on their part in concealing her defects, but he shall also forfeit the hilka (money) and the stri-dhana (bride's property) that might have been paid by him for the bride. 200 Ordinarily, in the opinion of Kautilya, a bride cannot be rejected after the panigrahana rite is performed: but she can be rejected even after panigrahana if it is afterwards detected that she had been unchaste. "In the case of brides and grooms of pure character and

195. Yaj. i, 66 (uttama sahasa , high offence, punishable by a fine of 1,060 panas) ; Nar. xii, 31 ; Man. ix, 224 (fine of 96 panas).

196. Man. viii, 205.

197. Man. ix, 72 ; Yaj. i, 76 ; Vis, 162.

198. Man. ix, 73,

199. Nar. xii, 16 ; 96.

200. Arth. p. 213 (Shamasastri's Tr.).

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high conduct", 201 however, the question of rejection on any other account can never be raised.

Narada and Parasara have laid down that marriage could be dissolved if the husband is found to be impotent ( kliba ) 202 Narada's theory is that woman is the field ( kshetra ) and man is the seed-giver (blyin); so the field must be given to one who has seed (blyavate). 203 Hence she who finds her husband devoid of virility may, after waiting for six months, choose another man as her husband. There are, according to these two Smritis , five cases

of legal sanction, wherein the wife is allowed to marry a second husband: She may take a second husband, if the first is missing ( nashta ), or dead ( mnta ), or becomes an ascetic (pravrajita ) , or is impotent (kliba), or is degraded from the caste ( patita ). 204 Narada further adds that in such cases, the woman shall be enjoined by her relatives to seek another husband, even if she does not herself think of doing so! (Nar. xn, 96). Madhavacharya commenting on Para. iv. 28, quotes an identical verse from Manu which, however, is not to be found in the text of Manu that has come to us today. In case the husband is missing, the wife who has no issue already must wait for his return for four years if she is a Brahmana, for three years if she is a Kshatnya, and for two years if she is a Vaisya. But if the wife has already had an issue from the lost husband, then each of these, respectively, is asked to wait for double the period mentioned above. 205 Gautama suggests that a wife may wait for six years for her husband who has disappeared. 206

Kauilya has permitted the woman to abandon her husband if he is a bad character, or is long abroad, or has become a traitor to the king, or is likely to endanger the life of his wife, or has fallen from his caste or has lost virility. 207 Also in cases of the

201. Arth. p. 212 (Shp\* .asastry's Tr.).

202. Nar. xii, 16 ; irara. iv, 28.

203. Nar. xii, 18-19.

204 Nar. xn, 97 ; cf. Para, iv, 28 ; cf. also Mahanirvanatantra , xi, 66 : "i Shan\$henodvdhitarn kanyam kalatite'pt parthiva/ yd nan udvdha~yedbhuyo vidhiresha sivodituh "

205 Nar. xii, 98-99; Vas. xvii, 75-79; Gaut. xviii, 15-17.

206. Gaut. xviii, 15.

207. Arth, p. 175 (Shamasasttry's Tr.).

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husband's absence for a long period abroad, the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisha and Sudra wife has to wait for four, two, three and one years respectively, for his return, if she has no issue. But if

she has an issue already, she must wait for double the period prescribed above; and during this period, the jTidti or the community must provide her with maintenance if she has none. She may wait for less period if she is not provided with maintenance. After this period of waiting is over she may marry any one whom she likes . 208

Kautilya also speaks of divorce ( moksha ). A divorce may be obtained only in the case of mutual enmity and hatred between the husband and his wife. Neither the husband nor the wife could dissolve the marriage against the will of the other party . 209 But even Kauulya, who alone of the Sastrakaras goes beyond the repudiation or rejection or abandonment ( tyaga ) as prescribed by Smritis, and gives a consideration to the problem of the divorce ( moksha ) of marriage, also stresses, like the Smritis , that marriages consecrated according to the Brahma, Daiva, Arsha and Prajapatya forms cannot be dissolved at all . 210

The remarriage of widows is generally not favoured by the Smritis. Or to put it in other words, even though, as we have seen above, the Smritis permit the widow to marry again, such re-marrying does not possess the sacramental character as the first marriage; the 're-marrying' is not 're-marriage'! "Once is a maiden given in marriage" seems to be the general rule of observance . 211 The Smritis as well as the Kdma-Sutras refer to a remarried widow as a punarbhu . 212 A true wife must preserve her chastity as much after as before her husband's death . 213 She should never insult his memory. Manu declares that the remarriage of widows is nowhere prescribed in the Sastras which treat of marriage . 214 The

208. Arth. pp. 180-81. 209 Arth. p. 171.

210. Arth. p. 177.

211. Man ix, 47 ; e saknt kanyd pradiyate ' ; Yaj. i, 65 ; also Nar. xii, 28.

212. e g., Man ix, 175 ; Nar. xii, 46 ; Vas. xvii, 20 ; Vis. xv, 8

213. Man. v, 151 ; Yaj. i, 75, 83 ; Vis. xxv, 13-14.

214. Man. v, 162 : x na dvitiyas cha sadhvinam kvachid bharto-

pa disyate ; and in ix. 65 : \*na vivaha-vidhavuktam vidhavd-vedanam punah'.

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Smritis eulogize the woman who keeps her husband's bed unsullied after his death . 215 Vatsyayana too, though he makes reference to the punarbhu, speaks of her in rather reproaching terms. He refers to a punarbhu, as a widow ( vidhava ) who, because she is unable to control her sex 230 seeks a person who is after enjoyment ( bhogin ). 217 He also calls her as a seeker after pleasure 218 At another place he says that sexual relations with a punarbhu and a vesyd (prostitute) are not proper (na sishtah ), but they are not forbidden (na pratishiddhah) , as they are meant merely for pleasure (sv kharthatvat) . 21 ° He thus ranks sex relation with a widow in the same category as that with a prostitute. The marriage rites, as we have already seen, require the bride necessarily to be a virgin according to Vatsyayana also. 220 This means that for a widow, there could be no regular rites of marriage according to him also. If there be a widow, as mentioned above, having intimate relations with a man, then evidently for Vatsyayana, such relations are not on the same level as those of sacred marriage relations. Manu and Yajñavalkya would say that the widow must not even mention the name of another man after her husband's death; she may spend her days of widowhood by emaciating her body, by living on pure flowers, roots and fruits 221 The widow who remains chaste ( brahmacharye vyavasthitā) reaches heaven after her death even though she has no son . 222 A widow who becomes unfaithful to her deceased husband has no claim on the property of her husband, – not even maintenance; she may even be excommunicated . \* ” 3

The Smritis , however, give two cases in which a woman can re-marry with recitation of the sacred mantras , the first marriage

215. Man. v, 151-65 ; Yaj. i, 75-77.

216. Hndnya-daurbalyad dtura \

217. Kam. iv, 2, 39. 218. ibid. : “saukhyarthmi”.

219. Kam. i, 4, 3. 220. See ante, Footnotes 30-31.

Also Man. vii, 226 : “The nuptial texts are applicable solely to

virgins and nowhere among human beings to females who have lost their virginity, for such females are excluded from sacred ceremonies ( pñnigrahanikā mantrāḥ kanyāśveva pratishthitāḥ /ndkanyāsu kvachit nrinam lupṭa-dharma-kṛtya hṛtāḥ).

221. Man. v, 157 ; Yaj. i, 75.



222. Man. v, 160 ; Yaj. i, 75 ; Para, iv, 26 ; Vis. xxv, 17.

223 Nêr. xii, 51 ff. ; Par5. x, 26-35.

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being considered by them as no marriage at all. Thus a damsel, abducted by force, and not wedded with the recitation of the sacred texts, may be lawfully given to another man; for, "she is as good as a maiden ." 224 The second case is that of a damsel who is married with the recitation of the sacred texts, but whose husband dies before the consummation of the marriage . 223 If such a woman is still a virgin, she can go through the sacrament of vivdha. The Mahdnirvanatantra also mentions a similar situation when a married woman is allowed to marry a second time; it says that a maiden who has been married (pannltd) but who has not co-habited (na ramitd) with her husband till his death, is eligible for marriage agam; such is the law among the Saivas ( saiva-dharmeshvayam vidhih) 226

A man who has entered the grihasthdsrama must not, under the rules of the Smntis , remain single. After the death of his wife, he should, according to the religious rites, take another wife without delay . 227 The MitdkJard, commenting on this rule of Yajna- valkya, says, that it holds good in case the husband has not obtained any male issue from his first wife. So that, in the latter case, even during the life-time of the first wife, the husband is allowed to take another wife. The Smritis permit a man to marry any number of wives from his own varna or from any of the lower ones, but he has never to take a wife from a vama higher than his own . 223 Yajnavalkya interprets this regulation as putting a restriction on the number of wives allowed for a man. Thus, a Brahmana can marry four wives, one from each varna; the Kshatriya can marry three wives, one from his own varna and one from each of the next two varnas ; the Vaisya can marry two wives; and the Sudra can marry only one wife . 229

From the point of view of the Hindu, there is an important

224. Vas. xvii, 73 ; Baudh. iv, 1, 1, 15.

225. Man. ix, 176 : sd ched dkiatayonih sydt . . . paunarbhavena  
 . , punah samskdram arhati/; also Nar. xii, 46 ; Vas. xvii, 20 ; Baudh. iv,  
 i\* 16 ; Vis. xv, 8.

226. Mahanirvanatantra xi, 67.

227. Y5j. i, 89 ; cl Man. v, 167-9.

228. Man. iii, 13 ; Yaj. i, 57 ; Bau. i, 16, 2-5 ; Vas. i, 24-25 ; Vis. xxiv,  
 1 - 4 .

229. Y5j. i, 57.

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question to be considered in relation to the number of wives allowed for a man, viz., the continuity of the family line. It takes us back to the very basis upon which the Hindu vivaha system is based. According to it, marriage is necessary because the continuity of the family line is essential , 230 and for the fulfilment of the social and personal duties and obligations ( nnas ) (See next Chapter on Family). Again, this continuity, depends on the male issue; for the daughter is a member of the family only till her marriage . 231 It is therefore of the very essence of a marriage union that sons should be born of it. Moksha is obtainable through sons and grandsons . 232 Therefore, man should marry more than once in case the first marriage fails to promote its main objective of begetting a male offspring This seems to be the mam idea underlying the permissive sanction for more than one wife to the Hindu. This is further evident from a consideration of the demands of mutual relations of fidelity between husband and wife, which we have discussed elsewhere . 233 It is their duty to perform religious rites and sacrifices together. And, so long as a householder ( grihastha ) has already a wife who is able to take part with him in his religious duties as a grihastha , and also has borne him issues, he must not take another woman for his wife . 234

That polygyny, though thus theoretically sanctioned, was looked upon as more or less exceptional event, is evident also from a consideration of the rules laid down for the 'supersession' of the first wife. Thus, according to Manu, a wife who is barren ( vandhyd ) may be superseded by another wife in the eighth year after marriage; she whose children do not survive, may be superseded by another wife in the tenth year after marriage; she who brings forth only female

issues may be superseded by another wife in the eleventh year; while a quarrelsome wife may be superseded by another without any delay . 235 But, a wife who is “kind to her husband and virtuous in her conduct may be superseded only with her consent, and must

230. Yaj. i, 77 ; Ap. ii, 5, 11, 12, etc.

231. Excepting in the case of an 'appointed' daughter, which is a remedy for continuity of family line devised by the Hindu law-givers. 232. Yaj. i, 77 ; Ap. ii, 5, 11, 12.

233. See next chapter on Family.

234. Ap. ii, 11,12 – (dharma-prajd-sampanne dare ndnyam kurvita.)

235. Man. ix, 81.

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never be disgraced” by such an act even though she happens to be diseased ( rogim ). 236

The most desirable state of married life is of course that in which both the husband and his wife are mutually devoted to each other till death . 2 \* 17 “Let man and woman, united in marriage, constantly exert themselves that they may never be disunited and may not violate their mutual fidelity ”. 238

The Artha-Sastra lays down slightly different rules in regard to marrying more wives than one, of which the following would be a brief statement .- 39 If the first wife has no issue at all, or has no male child, the husband has to wait for eight years; thereafter he may marry another woman. If she ever bore a dead child, the waiting period for the husband is extended to ten years. And, if she is mother of female issues only, the husband has to wait for twelve years before marrying another woman. For, “women are created for the sake of sons ”. 240 The man who violates the above rule will have to pay the first wife not only her Sulka and Stridhana property but also an adequate monetary compensation ( adhvana - mkam artham) f in addition to a fine of twenty-four panas to the Government. In fact, he may marry “any number of women”, provided he gives his wives proportionate compensation and adequate subsistence ( vritti ). 241

Vatsyayana's view about the number of wives allowed for a man is a little different from that stated above. He advises the first wife herself, if she happens to have had no issue from the marriage, to persuade her husband to marry another wife. The man should marry a second wife if the first wife bears no male issue, and if the continuity of the family is not ensured . 212 Though, at one place, he refers to the person devoted to one wife (efca-charin ), 213 the reference looks like a eulogy bestowed on an exceptional virtue. For, at another place, he advises the young maiden to choose a poor man as a husband who may be solely devoted

236. Man. ix, 82 : Yd roginī syat tu hita sampannd chaiva silatah f  
sdnujnapyddhivettavydndvaTnanyd cha karhichit/ /

237. Man. ix, 101 : "Anyonyasyavyabhīlcharo bhaved amaran&ntikdh/  
esha dharmah samdsena jneyah stri-pumsayoh parah/ f"

238,

Man. ix, 102.

239.

Arth.

pp. 174 f.

240.

Arth. p. 174.

241.

Arth.

p. 174.

Kam. iv, 2, 3.

243.

Kam.

i, 4, 43.

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to herself only (atma-dharana) , rather than a rich man whose riches would probably divide his love between many ( bahu - sadharanah) . 244 But here it is also probable that Vatsyayana is perhaps referring not to the love that was divided between more than one lawfully wedded wives, but between the wife and the paramours and mistresses, of whom he gives lengthy descriptions, and which seems to have been a fashion amongst the wealthy of his times . 245

Continuity of the family, as has been already pointed out, is the primary object of vivaha. A man is allowed to marry any number of wives primarily with this object in view. There is also another provision for the purpose mentioned for the widow whose husband dies without bearing her a son. Such a woman is allowed to bear a son to the younger brother of her husband, or any sapinda or sagotra of the husband . 246 This custom was known as Niyoga (levirate) ; and as will be seen from the stringent regulations prescribed for the same mentioned below, it was actuated with the sole purpose of begetting a son for the son-less widow. The person who was appointed under Niyoga to beget a son for the widow was to approach her "anointed with clarified butter, silently, to give one son only, and, by no means second ". 247 After the purpose of niyoga was attained, the man and the woman had to behave towards each other like a father and a daughter-in-law . 248 If they behaved otherwise, they became guilty of defiling the bed of a Guru or of a daughter-in-law 249 The child bom of niyoga was regarded as a kshetra ja son of the deceased husband, i.e. he was obtained in the field ( kshetra i.e. the wife) of the deceased; therefore he was considered as belonging to the deceased husband . 250 However, this custom has been looked down with distinct abhorrence by the Smritis. Manu considers it as beastly behaviour (paJu-dharma) and therefore inhuman, and prescribed nowhere in the Dharma t-

244. Kam. iii, 4, 55-56.

245. See Kam. v.

246 Yaj. i, 68-69 ; Gaut. xviii, 4 ; Man. ix, 59-60 ; Apa. 20, 27, 2-3 ; NEr. xii, 80-81.

247. Man. ix, 60 ; Yaj. i, 68 ; Nar xii, 80-81.

248. Man. ix, 62 : guruvachcha snushavachcha vartheydt&m paros-param.

249. Man. ix, 63. 2 50 \*

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Sastra . 251 Other Smriti writers too do not regard it as a proper custom. 252

This brings us to a close of the survey of the institution of vivaria. Before concluding, however, a few remarks on the system and institution of vivaha , as the Hindu conceives it, would not be out of place.

The various Vedic mantras recited by the bride, the groom and other parties concerned at the vivaha ceremony reveal some of the vital social implications underlying the Hindu view and aim of vivaha. These mantras repeat and reiterate the fundamental ideas and ideals of vivaha , to fulfil which the couple pledge themselves together. Socially as well as personally, both the husband and wife are conceived as equal, having equally important functions and status. The couple are asked to start their after-marriage career as the joint keepers of the home, in which capacity they are exhorted to strive their best to fulfil their marriage vow of not failing each other in the pursuit of dharma, artha and kdma. In the home, both the husband and wife are conceived as possessing rights, obligations and status consistent with the nature and the capacity of each of the two; and these rights, obligations, and status, though rightly not regarded as identical , are nonetheless viewed as equal in importance for the proper nurture of the family, and of its traditions and culture.

Thus, the wife is as much the mistress of the home ( griha - patni) as the husband is the master of the home (griha\* pati). Besides, the wife is the supreme ruler ( samrajni ) of the household. Each of them is repeatedly reminded to regard the other as his and her indispensable complement for the fulfilment of the various social and domestic obligations enjoined on those in charge of a household (garhapatyaya) . The newly married couple is exhorted to live in perfect harmony with each other, ever avoiding quarrelling and always happy with each other (modamanau; ma viyaushtam); and the couple on their part pray together that the Higher Powers bless them with a complete union of hearts (samapo hridayani nau ) as well as bodies ( tanvam ).

251. Man. ix, 66-68.

252. Brih. Smr. xiv, 12 ; Baudh. ii, 3, 33 c; Ap. ii, 27, 2 ff. ; Hdr. xii, 81 ; and 48 ; Nar, iv, 17.

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The couple was exhorted not only to fulfil the biological obligations of reproduction and nurture of the children, but to live to be father and mother of heroes and leaders ( virasti ). And, they were asked not only to carry out the social obligations connected with the dharmas of the grihasthsrama but also to fulfil the individual or psychological obligation of exerting to attain the fullness of each other's personalities in each other's company, till their bodies withered by age and death came to them. From the social side, vivaha may be said to be a recognition and acceptance by the bride and the groom of the dchdras and dharmas, the practices and the ideals, that prevail in and rule the community to which they belong.

Also, our brief survey of the problem of marriage will give a fair indication of the ideas, ideals and purposes underlying the Hindu marriage. In the first place, one of the purposes underlying the invdha seems to be in the endeavour to secure the best progeny for the family, for the fulfilment of which man must take the best bride available and the maiden is wedded to the best groom available. Secondly, the problem of marriage-relationship is not decided somehow or anyhow by the parents; it is sought to be solved, on the contrary, with a view to serving the needs of regulated social behaviour, organization and control; all these are broadly and generally defined by the Grihya-Sutras and the Dharma-Siitras; though later on they were modified or altered by customs of the varnas , and of the times and places (desa and kdla), all the same the Sutra tradition may be said to have been generally followed and practised by all the varnas and the jdtis. In fact, the problem of marriage relationship was sought to be solved on the basis of deliberation, choice and selection with reference to certain guiding principles and rules, and not of any personal infatuation or fancy.

And, if in addition to this, we consider the after-marriage relations between the man and his wife as sanctified ceremonially in terms of the samskdras that follow the vivdha, we may be enabled to see the depth of the seriousness and scrutiny which amounts to sacredness that is attached to married life. In these ceremonies, the vow (vrata) of celibacy ( brahmacharya ) has to be observed for a brief period after marriage; and the mating rites presuppose and ordain that the mere satisfaction of sex-impulse of the couple

is not the main idea underlying their marriage, and reminds them that they are wedded and they mate essentially in order to live a

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life of higher purposes. Further, in this connection, we should also consider the other rules laid down in the Dharma-Sdstras regarding the control of sex-life, wherein sexual relations are considered lawful only under certain conditions of the body and the mind and the whole being of each of the parties concerned, while all other sexual relations are classified as vyabhichdra or misconduct or not becoming human being.\* And, if we put and co-ordinate all these considerations together, we can well understand how the best interests of the propagation of the species, of the upkeep of the line of pitris whose descendants\* sacred place of dwelling and doing is to be the home, are expected to be subserved by the institution of vivdha by observing a life of self-control by both the man and his wife who become the managers of the home for the while. In fact, the responsibilities, duties and obligations, as also the advantages for the gnastha and the grihini, which the groom and the bride are going to become, are summed up during the marriage ceremony and held up before the vision of the new couple, for the fulfilment and satisfaction of which they pledge themselves jointly at the wedding.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FAMILY

r I "‘HOUGH almost everybody is born in a family and seems to know and understand what family is from first hand experience, yet the many special studies which have been devoted in recent years to "The Family" bring out very prominently how very difficult it is to define precisely and briefly the institution of the family. In a recent comprehensive and careful study of the family, Burgess and Locke have defined it as "a group of persons united by ties of marriage, blood or adoption; constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister; and creating and maintaining a common culture"



They also point out that “The two necessary elements in the definition of a phenomena are that (1) it should be wide enough to include all cases to be covered, and (2) it should be specific enough to exclude all marginal cases”, like the household, kin, fraternity, etc , if we are concerned with defining the family. And, presumably, in their judgment, the above definition of the family satisfies these conditions. In the view of Maclver and Page, the family is “a group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and upbringing of children”, and “It may include collateral or subsidiary relationships, but it is constituted by the living together of mates, forming with their offspring a distinctive unity”. 1 2

All these generalizations are probably based entirely or very largely upon the family institution as it is known among the western peoples. However, as Dunlap has been careful to point out, it is well-nigh impossible to define the family universally

1. Burgess, E W and Locke, H. J : The Family , p. 8.

2. Maclver, E. M. and Page, C. Society , p 238.

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“except in an arbitrary way.” 3 It is true that in one of its well-known forms, it consists of a man and a woman with their joint children living together in the same abode during the minority of their children. 4 5 6 But even this form has many variations. Thus, there are families without children; or with adopted children; or with the man having a different abode of his own than the woman and the children; or with the grandparents, aunts, uncles, and/or grandchildren as members; or with more than one wife or husband or both; or in which there is the widowed mother with her children; or in which there is the single mother with her adopted children/ And, there may be a community, like the Nayars of South India, who have excluded the satisfaction of sexual needs from the functions of the family/ Their women marry according to Hindu custom, but the actual father has no control over his children who belong to the mother’s group, have no claims over him or his property, and may even use their mother’s brother’s name as part of their full name. Further, though most families are characterized by the union of man and woman and their offspring, if any, yet once a family is established it persists even after the man or the woman is dead. In the opinion of Nimkoff, if there is no offspring born, it would be improper to speak of the family,

for there is no such thing as a “childless family”; a more correct expression in such a case would be “childless marriage”. 7 Domicile and residence together of the members of the family is one other criterion which it is difficult to apply strictly to the Hindu family, which, as we shall see in this chapter, is united mainly not by the so many physical and tangible bonds but much more by the spiritual, religious and psychological bonds between generations after generations as also between the members of the same generation.

Although the family began in its earliest origins as a reproductive or biological association, it has developed into a primary social

3. Dunlap, K. : Civilized Life : The Principles and Applications of Social Psychology, pp. 136-7.

4. ibzd.

5. ibid.

6. Thurston, E. Rangachari : Tribes and Castes of South India , Madras, 1909. See also, Linton, R. : The Study of Man, pp. 154-8.

7. Nimkoff, M. F. : The Family, p. 8.

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unit of the highest importance for man. “Of all the organizations, large or small, which the society unfolds” observe Maclver and Page 8 , “none transcends the family in the intensity of its sociological significance. It influences the whole society in innumerable ways, and its changes. . . . reverberate through the whole social structure. It is capable of endless variation and yet reveals a remarkable continuity and persistence through change ” 8 As a social institution, it has emerged in order to satisfy certain very basic biological, psychological and social needs of man. And, even though it has gone through many changes during the past centuries and several of its original functions like the educational, the economic, the religious, and the recreational have been gradually taken away by other social and state agencies, yet its basic functions which center around the primary bio-psycho-social needs of man have not been affected. These primary functions are (1) the more stable satisfaction of the sex need of the man and the woman, (2) procreation, care and nurture of the young, and (3) the sharing of a home and all that this involves. 9 “Only in a successful family”, say Maclver and Page,

“are these three functions so united that each of them reinforces and enriches the satisfaction of the others. Sex becomes not a detached phenomenon – as it tends to be in extramarital relations and usually is in prostitution– but part of a larger experience of meeting common problems. And the nurture of the children takes place within the focus of the home which, as considerable evidence seems to indicate, is a more favourable environment for them than that of the state nursery of other public or private agencies.”<sup>10</sup> Even in Russia, where the family has undergone by far greater changes than anywhere else in the world during the past thirty years, with nurseries for children and other services being highly developed under the control of the State so as to strip the family of many of its former functions, its primary biological and socio-psychological functions have not been affected.<sup>11</sup> “The central factor of continuity between the old and the new family in Russia, conclude Burgess and Locke after a survey of the Russian family,

8. MacIver, M. R. & Page, C. : Society , p. 240.

9. *ibid* . pp. 254 ; 263-4.

10. *ibid* . (*Italics in the original*).

\*11. Burgess, E. W, and Locke : *op. cit* , pp. 180-202.

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“is an intangible but very real thing, viz. deep family feeling and the affection and solicitude of parents for children, which survived the Revolution and now again is being expressed freely and openly.” This means, therefore, “that the capacity of the family to persist under unfavourable conditions has been dramatically confirmed by the outcome of events in the Soviet Union. The evidence from the great Russian experiment seems to prove that the family can survive without the support of law and even in the face of governmental attempts to weaken and undermine it .”<sup>12</sup> As Helen Bosanquet in her excellent work on the subject pointed out long ago, “Even if the world could carry on without the family, it could not afford to lose the qualities which would go with it. It is a sombre world as it is, and no shade or tone of feeling that makes for depth and variety and richness can be spared from it. To reject the source of so much warmth and beauty because it sometimes fails, would be like banishing the sun from the sky because it is sometimes covered with clouds .”<sup>13</sup>

All this goes to prove the deep-rooted and all-embracing socio-psychological significance of the institution of the family for the individual and the society. Man is not born human, nor is he born social; but he becomes so both through association and communication and the family is the first and foremost agency in his "cultural conditioning" in this direction, by providing for him "his earliest behaviour patterns and standards of conduct ." 14 The infant at birth is primarily on a biological level. Its first contacts by which it begins to become a social-psychological being are in the family. "The child is surrounded by social definitions in the family. Moral attitudes abound for every situation. Ideas of right and wrong are repeatedly emphasized. The child finds ready-made ways of doing things presented to him almost before the occasion arises for their use. . . . Sentiments built up around certain objects and practices become cogent factors in the lives of individuals. Ritualistic performances on special occasions, family traditions that have become sacred are closely related to sentimental attitudes. There are political, religious and social opinions that are potential

12. *ibid.* p. 201-202.

13. Bosanquet, H. ; *The Family* , p. 245. Macmillan, London, 1915.

14. Burgess and Locke: *op. cit.*, pp. 212-13.

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forces in the family atmosphere. The pattern of behaviour and attitudes in the family reflect day after day the customs of the larger group in which the family finds itself ." 15

The earliest basic traits of the personality of the individual are formed in the family, which transmits the cultural heritage to him and thus maintains a cultural continuity between the individual and his society, and indeed between generations to generations of the society. It is the most effective link of cultural adjustment between them. "A baby is born, not only into a culture, but also into an environment of interpersonal relations. From the moment of birth the infant is in emotional and mental interaction first with its mother, and then with the other members of the family. These emotional experiences, psychological rather than cultural in their nature, give definitive shape to the initial structure of personality .... (which is) the unique configuration of an individual's pattern

of responses to others and to himself as determined by psychogenic conditioning 5,16 The genic traits and characteristics which are due to the biological inheritance provide the raw material for the shaping of personality; they provide the potentialities on the one hand and the limitations on the other within which personality traits could develop, improve or change. But, their actual "function and meaning develop in the psychogenic interaction and in social experience ." 17 They are formed in the early emotional development of the child in the family environment, in the interpersonal relationships of the family. They include "tendencies to extroversion and introversion, dominance or submission, optimism or pessimism, emotional independence or dependence, self-confidence or lack of confidence in self, and ego-centrism or socio-centrism ." 18 The interaction of the members of the family in their psychogenic aspects is termed by Burgess and Locke "the family psychodrama", with a psychological stage on which "the players take roles determined by the interplay of the emotions of love, fear, and hate, of the feelings of superiority and inferiority, and of reactions of security, insecurity, adequacy, and inadequacy ". 19 In such a psychodrama, the psychogenic re-

15. Brown, L. Guy : Social Psychology , 1934, p. 73.

16. Burgess & Locke : op. cit, p. 241.

17. ibid . p. 243.

18\* ibid. p. 244.

19. ibid, p. 245.

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action patterns of the individual are gradually shaped, moulded and fixed; and they are not likely to change afterwards. "In general, they tend to evolve according to the trends set up in early infancy. If they can be changed significantly it is probably only in the period in which they are being formed; i.e., in the early months and years of life " 20

The psycho-social influence of the family environment on the child is so deep and so quick, that in the view of the psychologists the child acquired almost all its personality and character traits of later adulthood before five, and according to some, even earlier. Allport tells us of a careful observational study made by two psychologically-minded parents of their infant, keeping records of its

behaviour, from the moment of its birth onwards upto four months, on the basis of which the following prophecy was made as to its future character: "ready laughter, well-adjusted i.e. 'normal' and 'introverted', capable of considerable temper, active, sensitive of rhythm, adaptable, wiry and muscular, tall, mischievous, with linguistic superiority." 21 These qualities, of course, could not have been actually observed in the infant at four months, but indications were noticeable in the child which suggested the beginnings of these qualities. Later, other teachers also co-operated in making analyses and records of the character and personality of the child without any knowledge of the previous records and without any knowledge of each other's records. These records, which were continued upto the age of nine of the child, corroborated in an astonishing manner the early prophecy regarding the child's prospective character. Allport concludes that vague and variable indications of distinctive traits are evident at as early an age as even four months, and that from early infancy there is consistency in the development of personality. 22 This study and other studies have been cited by Allport to show that the innate determinants of personality – since, at birth and upto four months, only innate tendencies would be manifest to a large extent – are very important; 23 but he further observes that

20. *ibid.* p. 244.

21. Allport, G. W. : *Personality – A Psychological Interpretation*, pp. 122-ff, 22. *ibid.* p. 125 (*Italics in the original*).

22. cf. the Marṣṭh3 saying : \* mulache paya pa\anyant distaf i.e. 'An infants feet (i.e. the direction his personality is going to take) are noticeable in the cradle.'

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they do not imply that the family environment has no effect on the development of the child's personality. 24 Indeed, it is possible that the original tendencies may be supported, modified or even destroyed according as the family environment is supporting, modifying or destructive of these tendencies, 23 though, the limits and scope of such changes are set by the innate tendencies. Environmental forces are bound to affect the child's character and personality development particularly during the first three to five years, by which time its psychogenic personality traits will have been nearly fixed and, as we have already pointed out above (pp. 204-5), no change

in the environment later will appreciably alter these basic traits. If a personality appears to have changed dramatically in later life, on closer examination and analysis it would be found to have been changed not in its basic psychogenic traits, but in 'social type', i.e., in the social expressions and manifestations of the traits. Thus, say Burgess and Locke:

"St. Paul on the road to Damascus was converted from a persecutor of Christianity to a proselytiser for it. This was a transformation in social attitudes, for in his new role he was the same dominating, self-confident, optimistic personality as of old. All such instances of profound transmutations from sinner to saint, from drunkenness to total abstinence, from radical to conservative, from pauper to millionaire, are changes in attitudes, in character, in ideals, in roles, and in social type, and not variations in psychogenic reaction patterns. These .... remain basically the same.

The family, as a social unit, has already assimilated through years and ages, the traditions, the sentiments and the modes of behaviour of the society. It therefore plays the part of a suitable medium to convey these to its individual members. Thus in the

24. Allport, op. cit. p 125. Some eminent biologists, however, hold a strong hereditarian view in regard to man's development. For instance, Parker concludes that "we are perhaps about nine-tenths inborn and one-tenth acquired. What we get by education is a small acquisition planted in a very large inborn background"—Parker, G. H : The World Expands , p. 252, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass. Burgess and Locke also note that the biologists are inclined to stress the importance of biological heredity. See Burgess and Locke, op. cit, p. 2 -

25. Allport: op. cit.

26. Burgess, E. W. & Locke, E.J. : The Family , p. 245.

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family, 'the biological, psychological and sociological forces meet in giving the individual his start in life .' 27 The tremendous influence of the family on the individual is brought out from the negative side by indicating the harms into which a disorganised family is likely to involve the individual. "Families develop moral codes, more or less in conformity to the general sentiments, but with interesting

variations. The family, more than any other group perhaps, affects the development of the individual's moral attitudes. It has an almost uncontested control over children in their earlier and most impressionable years. Sensitive to the prevailing culture, it seeks to transmit the moral ideas of the group to its members. When it fails in this task, through disorganization, the child may grow up with distorted sentiments and find itself socially isolated or at war with the community ." 28

Psychoanalysts have also emphasised this aspect of psycho-social influence of the family on the individual. Flugel observes that "Even on a superficial view it is fairly obvious that, under existing social conditions, the psychological atmosphere of the home life, with the complex emotions and sentiments aroused by and dependent on the various family relationships must exercise a very considerable effect on human character and development. Recent advances in the study of human conduct indicate that this effect is even greater than has been generally supposed: it would seem that, in adopting his attitude towards the members of his family circle, a child is at the same time determining to a large extent some of the principle Aspects of his relations to his fellowmen in general; and that an individual's outlook and point of view in dealing with many of the most important questions of human existence can be expressed in terms of the position he has taken up with regard to the problems and difficulties arising within the relatively narrow world of the family ." 29 Adler's studies of the child in its relation to the family, and Freud's psychoanalytical studies are too well known in this connection. Comte had recognised this deep influence of the family life upon the individual, when he said: "In the family life alone can the social instincts find any basis for growth ." 30

27. Young : Social Psychology , 1931, p. 237.

28. Kreuger and Reckless : \* Social Psychology\*, p. 274.

29. Flugel, J. C.: The Psychoanalytic Study of the Family, p. 4.

30. Comte: Positive Philosophy , vol. II, ch. V. quoted by Ellwood. -

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All the altruistic attitudes of man could be traced to their roots in the family life; co-operation, self-sacrifice, service to humanity, universal brotherhood, love of living beings, have been traced back to their origins to co-operation in the family-life . 31 The interaction



of each of the members with the others in the family is of profound significance in determining the individual's mental attitudes and his behaviour in society. Dr. Burgess, therefore, has rightly stressed the importance of family as "a unity of interacting personalities" 32 , and Waller and Hill refer to it as "an arena of interacting personalities ." 33

The foregoing analysis also indicates the functions which the family institution performs in a society. Among its most important functions are regulating and disciplining the sex impulse and giving it stability and durability, which is principally a function in relation to the two founders and the principal actors in the family psychodrama. Marriage and family are the means used by society to control promiscuous expression of sex and dissipation of man's energy which could be directed and used in many other useful channels, without, at the same time, entirely suppressing the sex. In fact, they make sex a more meaningful, a more enriching experience. "All other things being equal", says Nimkoff, "sex expression in marriage proves to be more satisfying than sex expression apart from marriage. Psychology has made the reason for this fact clear. For civilized human beings, satisfaction in the expression of any fundamental drive depends not merely upon the act of the expression alone, but also upon the factors associated with it. For example, a civilized human being is not satisfied to eat just anything at all. His pleasure varies with the nature of food, the way it is prepared, and the conditions under which it is consumed. Sex is in no way different, unless it be that satisfaction here depends even more upon attending circumstances. Marriage (and family, we may add) makes possible such a conditioning of the sexual relationship as to give to it the greatest significance of which it is capable. In marriage, sex may become enriched by all the sentiments which associ-

31. Ellwood: " Sociology in its Psychological Aspects", pp 213 ff.

32. Burgess, E. W. "The Family as a Unity of Interacting Personalities", in "The Family ", Vol. VII (March, 1926), pp. 3 ff.

33. Waller, W. and Hill, R The Family : A Dynamic Interpretation, Ch. 2, Dryden Press, N. Y. 1951.

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ation in an enterprise affords. Sex acquires a depth and breadth

of meaning which it otherwise lacks. Thus marriage regulates sex in order to make it more meaningful ". 34

A most important service of the family is that it provides for the satisfaction of what Thomas regards as the four "fundamental" wishes or desires, viz., the wishes for new experience, for security, for recognition and for response , 33 because these and their combinations perhaps include all other desires and therefore can be used to explain the inner motivations of all social behaviour . 36 These wishes are universal, and represent the fundamental needs underlying all social relationships. The family is the most significant field where every individual takes his first lessons in the satisfaction of these wishes. The actual concrete desires of individuals will vary from time to time and culture to culture, but they will be found to be combinations of two or more of these fundamental wishes which are the ultimate underlying motives of social behaviour. For instance the wish for mastery or power is a combination of the wishes for recognition and security , 37 and so on.

Thus, the new experiences, the new stimuli, the new associations the child meets with in the family environment aid in its mental and social development. The satisfaction of the need for security begins with the physical and emotional security, given to it from birth onwards by embracing, caressing, nursing and other kinds of personal attention. "Typically, the family is a haven of security to which its members turn for comfort and reassurance from the troubles and trials of the outside world. . . . in adjustments to the outside world. Two hampering conditions to personal adjustment are the lack of family security or overdependence upon it. The function of family security is to promote rather than interfere with the transition from the stage of dependence to that of independence ." 33 The need for recognition is satisfied through the roles the child plays in the family, the attention he secures, the statuses he occupies, the approvals he gets therein. The need for response is

34. Nimkoff, M. F. : The Family , (1934), pp. 55-56.

35. Burgess & Locke : op. cit, pp. 302 f f.

36. ibid. Also Britt, S.H., Social Psychology of Modern Life (1949) pp. 106-8.

37. Burgess and Locke : op. cit., pp. 318, 327.

38. ibid. 309-10.

satisfied through the affection and the comradeship he receives in the family. In fact, the responses in the family are more intimate than elsewhere and are always reciprocal, between the husband and the wife, between parents and children. Ogburn has rightly stressed the affectional bond as a very important one that holds the family together, and the one bond on which the family must continue to rely for its solidarity even if all the others fail or are reduced in strength.<sup>39</sup> Through the affectional bond in the family, man, woman and child learn the technique and expression of affectional virtues which stand them in service in dealing with the outside world. The “feeling of being alone and apart from others comes much less frequently to those who have families of their own. Even when there is friction between the husband and wife, the desire of each for intimate response may be satisfied.”<sup>40</sup>

Apart from economic security, the family in many societies affords a religious security to its members. This is particularly true of the Hindu family. The Hindu parents find a spiritual immortality through their sons. Their future life here and hereafter is blessed through sons and their sons and their religious and social behaviour. Family prayers and rituals have to be gone through by elders with children. The family, the home, is the place to which one can look for personal psychological peace and security. It is the retreat to which man retires after the day's work and his dealings with the outside world to relax, to recoup, and to regain his physical and psychic balance in order to be able to deal effectively with the outside environment again.<sup>41</sup>

We may conclude this section with one or two general observations: The family must have had its origins in the biological phenomenon of reproduction, but, it gradually developed into a socio-psychological phenomenon of the highest significance. On the one hand, several of its functions have been taken away from it by various agencies, and on the other, despite this, its central function of affectional unity has become stronger and stronger in the more complex and civilized societies. And finally, in some civilized

39. Ogburn, TV I. : “Social Heritage and the Family”, pp 24-39 in *Family Life Today* , Houghton Wiffhn, 1925— Quoted by Nimkoff, op. cit pp. 57-60.

40. Nimkoff : op ext p 56,

41. Nimkoff : ibid pp. 76-7.

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societies, and predominantly among the Hmdus, as we shall notice below, the original biological functions and the satisfaction of the sex were positively made subservient to the higher values of life, to moral and spiritual life and to life after death.

## I

This general background and discussion on the family will help us to understand the Hindu family psychodrama in its proper perspective, and we may now begin our inquiry into the structure and functions of the Hindu Family. The real family life of a Sndtaka, i.e. one who has completed his course of the brahmacharyasrama, starts with his marriage (vivaha). Beginning from the acceptance of the bride's hand, that is, as soon as he is wedded, the man is to prepare himself to undertake "the activities connected with the home" (grihyam).<sup>42</sup> Here, according to the Hindu Dharma-Sdstras, he has to practice all those rites (vidhis) intended for the preservation and continuity of the kula, which word may be translated as the 'Family'. With the sacred fire kindled at the wedding, the grihi (i.e. the grihastha) has to follow, according to the rules and regulations and directions of the sastras, the domestic activities and duties and the "five great sacrifices" (pancha mahd-yajnas).<sup>43</sup> These five sacrifices are intended to expiate the sins committed by a grihastha and which, as a grihastha, he cannot but help committing, at the five "slaughter-houses",<sup>44</sup> as it were, which exist in each home, viz., the hearth (chulU) 9 the grinding-stone (pesham) f the broom (upaskarah), the pestle and mortar,<sup>45</sup> and the water-vessel.<sup>46</sup> While using these implements and tools in the home, he would wittingly or unwittingly cause destruction of so many creatures, like ants, worms, etc. The five great sacrifices are the Brahma-ya^na, the

42. As, G.S. i, 9, 1: 'pani-grahanadi grihyam paricharef; also Par. GS. i, 2, 1; Kh. G.S. i, 5, 1; San. i, 1; Hir. G.S. i, 7, 22, 2-3; Ap. G.S. ii, 5, 14; etc.

43. Man. iii, 67; also, Yaj. 1, 97; San. G.S. i, 1 ff; As. G.S. i, 9; Par. G.S. i, 2; Go. G.S. i, 1, etc.

44. Suna = pasuvadhasthanam - (Kulluka).

45. KaTi\$an% =s ulukhala-musale.

46. Uakumbha.

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Pitri-yajna, the Deva-ya<sup>na</sup>, the Bhuta-yajna and the Nri-yajna, (or Manushya-yajna) . 47

These expiatory sacrifices are performed in terms of the execution of certain social and human duties. Thus, teaching and studying are to be pursued as expressive of the brahma-yajna , which is offered to the memory of the distinguished and learned sages of the past ( rishis ) ; the offering of water and food known as turpana and offered at the sraddha ceremony forms the sacrifice to the spirit or memory of the ancestors (pitri-yajna ) ; oblations offered to the sacred fire ( homa ) have reference to the sacrifice to the gods ( deva - yajna ) ; offering of food to alleviate and propitiate the spirits which are supposed to influence human beings constitutes the bhuta-yajna, and the hospitable offerings of food and shelter to guests and strangers (atithi-pujanam) has to be performed in a spirit of sacrifice to man (nri-yajna) . 48 Every householder ( kutumbin ) must offer these five great sacrifices in order to gain permanent (nityam) happiness . 4 " 1 Indeed, these five viz , the sages, the ancestors, the gods, the spirits and the strangers look up ( asatam ) to him in expectation of these offerings . 50 The grihastha-and-his-grihin ( dampati ) should take their meals only after ( sesha-bhoga ) they have duly honoured the rishis , devas, pitris, griha-devatas (the guardian deities of the home), the atithis (guests) and the bhrityas 51 (servants). Therefore, a discipline of giving away, of parting with things of worldly value, is sought to be cultivated in the home . 52 Clarified butter, which is one of the most expensive articles of food, has to be poured out into the fire, 5 '\* as a symbol of this. The householder ought never to seek to accumulate or amass wealth; he should live in the manner of a silanchha , i.e. in the manner of one who does not accumulate the harvest of the farm, but distributes that to those who are in need of it.

47. Man. iii, 68-69

48. Man. iii, 70 and 81 ; Yaj i, 102 ; As. G.S. iii, 1, 1-4

49. Man. iii, 79-81 ; Yaj i, 23, 104.

50. Man iii, 80.

51. Man. iii, 116-17; also Par GS. ii, 9, 12-14; Yaj. i, 105. Par. GS. ii, 9, 15, however adds : "The householder, may, however eat before

other members of the house". .

52. See the observations on the current use of the term Yaja mana, on pp. 63-65, *supra*.

53. cf. Thoothi r \*The Vaishnavas of Gujarat \ p. 32.

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while he himself lives on the fallen and abandoned stalks of corn and grain that remain on the farm after the harvest is taken away . 54

The sacred fire kindled at the time of the vivaha has to be kept alive ceaselessly with great vigilance . 55 When the husband is absent from the house (as when he is on journey, etc.), this fire is to be looked after and worshipped by his wife or m her absence, by the son, or daughter or the pupil (antevasi va) as the case may be . 56 The wife has to undergo a fast if it goes out, m the opinion of some, says Asvalayana . 67

The Gnhyas-Siitras have prescribed ceremonies and rituals for building a house too. The ceremonies symbolise prosperity of wealth, cattle and progeny in the house. The home is supposed to be the dwelling place not only for the living members of the family, but also for the fathers and fore-fathers who have passed away and for the children and grand-children who are to come. The owner of the house to be built draws, with an Udumbara\* branch, three times a line round the building-ground while uttering: "Here I include the dwellings for the sake of food", and sacrifices in its centre on an elevated spot, with the mantras , "Who art thou? Whose art thou? To whom do I sacrifice thee, desirous of dwelling in the village? Swaha\ Thou art the god's share on this earth. From here have sprung the fathers who have passed away. . . etc . 58 There are invocations to the deities asking them to guard the home, that it may be 'prosperous, long-lasting, standing amid prosperity', and to which "may the child come; and the calf ." 59 The builder of the house establishes the sacred fire inside the house after it is built , 60 and entering the house offers oblations to the Vastoshpati (Lord of dwelling) in

54. Yaj. i, 128.

55. Asv. G.S. i, 9, 2.

56. Asv G.S. i, 9, 1 ; Śan. G.S. ii, 17, 3.

57. Asv. G.S. i, 9, 3

♦The symbolic significance of using a branch of Udumbara tree in this connection is obvious. Its branches grow rather evenly on all sides. Its life is also rather long, and it bears fruit profusely. When full grown, it covers a wide area under the roofs of its branches, and therefore can afford cool shelter to a large number of people under it.

58. Śan. G.S. ili, 2, 1-2 ; cf. also A&v. G.S. ii, 7 f. ; Gobh. Gr. S. iv, 7 ; etc.

59. Śan. G.S. iii, 9 ; Asv. G.S. ii, 8, 16 ; Far. G.S. iii, 4, 4; etc.

6k Par. G.S. 4, 5 gives a lengthy ritualistic description of this.

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order that he may be saviour of the human beings and animals that may come to dwell in the house . 61

In such a home, the grihastha ( kutumbin ) has to satisfy the rishis by studying and learning ( svadhyaya ), worship the devas (gods) by burnt oblations, remember the pitns (manes) by tarpana offerings ( . sraddha ), serve men by offering food (anna) to them and other living creatures ( bhutas ) by the bah offerings . 62 And, after he has thus attained freedoom from all obligations and dues to the society (dnnnyam gatvd ), i.e. having satisfactorily fulfilled them in and through the home m accordance with the sdstras, he is to make over everything to the son, and dwell in his home without caring for any worldly concern . 63

The grihastha has to do all these activities as a matter of duty; besides, by fulfilling these obligations, he enhances his dharma. For, after a householder's (kutumbin) death neither father, nor mother, nor wife, nor sons, nor relations stay with him to be his companions to help him (sahdydrtham) ; dharma alone remains with him . 6 " 1 "Single is each person born, single he dies; single he enjoys the fruit of good deeds, and single he suffers the penalty of sms. Leaving the dead body on the ground like a log of wood or a clod of earth, the relatives depart from him. Only his dharma follows him. Let him, therefore, incessantly act for the gradual accumulation of dh-arma , in order that it may be of help to him after death. For,

with the help of dharma , he will be able to traverse a gloom (tamas) which is otherwise difficult to pass through ." 65

The foregoing outline of the Hindu's gnha , its relation to the householder, and the rites and rituals by which it has to be incessantly hallowed is sufficient to give us some clue into the psychology of the Hindu home. As we have said, the Hindu home is the dwelling place not only of the living members of the family, but also of the pitris, the ancestors, under the care and blessings of Agni, – the sacred Fire, the presidmg deity of the home The panchamahdyajnas have to be performed in the presence of Agni The fathers and fore-

61. San. G.S. in, 4, 2 ; Far. G S. lii, 4, 7 ; Kh GS. iv, 2, 6-21 ; Ap. vii, 17 ; etc.

62. Han. iii, 81 ; also Yaj. i, 23 ; 104

63. Man. iv, 257.

64. Man. iv, 239.

65. Man. iv, 239-242

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fathers are to be remembered every day at the time of pitriyajna. And, even the Sudra, the lowest class, is allowed to practise the panchamahdyajnas , though he has to do this without the recitation of the mantras.<sup>™</sup> Thus the psychology of spiritual continuity forms the basis of the Hindu's family and its traditions (kula-dharma and kula-parampara) . The living members of the family are, so to speak, trustees of the home which belongs to the pitris , the ancestors, in the interests of the putra\$ } – future members of the family. All the property enjoyed by the members of the family belongs to the home and not to any particular member or members of the family. And the home consists of a continuity of all the members of the family – past members that are no more, present members that are living, and future members that are to come into being. The home therefore is the place wherein there is common kitchen, common property, common god, common weal and common woe. The central idea here is the worship of the family ( kula ) as a temple of sacred traditions ( parampard ).

Life in this world, for the Hindu, is a sojourn . 67 The individual does not belong to the home, nor does the home belong to the indi-



vidual. He comes from elsewhere, belongs to elsewhere, where he shall have to go. The individual has to perform his due dharmas and karmas here, without manifesting any sign of ownership. All the home property belongs, in the social meaning, to the individual's fore-fathers, and his progeny, not to the individual himself. In this sense, we may say, that the home is supposed to belong to the perpetual Agni in the home, the symbol of the continuity of the family.

The home, moreover is the place where the Dharma-Sastras as also the Artha-Sdstras and the Karma-Sdstras are practised. It is the place where the dharmas and the karmas are thought out, practised and idealized. Even though the grihastha is free to behave in any way he likes within normal limits, within the four walls of his house, there is always present a divine witness ( saksht ) to each and every one of his deeds in the form of the Agni, the permanent sacred fire of the home, who keeps watch over, blesses, directs and inspires the dharmas and the karmas of the inmates of the home. He is also

66. Y&j. i» 121 ; Man. x, 127, and Kulluka's commentary on it ; also ct Vish, Fura. iii, 8, 33 ; Maha. Ganti. 60, 35-37.

67. See our discussions in chapter II.

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the intercessor between man and his departed forefathers, and between man and the Gods. He is the God's representative to interpret the divine to man and the human to the Gods. 68 The gha thus belongs in this sense, to Agni-Deva , and to the past and coming members of the family, and partially only – and that in a limited sense – to the ghaastha himself.

It is in view of these ideas and ideals that the grihastha is asked to live a life of non-attachment in the family; thus a spirit of selflessness, ( aliptatva or samnyasta vntti) even while conducting the affairs of the world, restrains and dominates his thought and action. The grihastha should himself feel perfectly at peace in the gha , realising that after all the griha is really in charge of and under the guidance and supervision of Agni.

We can thus see that there are two kinds of checks upon the Hindu grihastha: In the first place, the individual himself does not belong to this samsdra. He belongs elsewhere. For him, the samsdra is kshana-bhangura – a temporary field of action ( karma -

bhumi). In the second place, his life in grihasthsrama must be lived and directed only in terms of necessary dharmas and karmas. To the extent to which the individual performs these, he prepares himself for the next stage of life, and then the final goal, viz. moksa.

## II

With this preliminary survey of the salient points in the general psychology of Hindu family life, we shall now commence a review of the Hindu family in relation to its members and vice versa , and the interpersonal relations of the members among themselves, in order to get a complete view of the socio-psychological implications of the Hindu family. The first thing that strikes us when we consider the Hindu family is its joint nature. All the members of the family live together in the same abode. The family circle is not the narrow one consisting of parents and children only; very often it used to be as wide as could be, there being presumably no limit on its size. But, it seems that normally the joint family included three generations; for, the life-span of three generations is around a hundred

68. Cf. Thoothi ; The Vaishriavas of Gujarat, p. 32.

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years; and it would be extremely rare that an individual may outlive a century. The Hindu law texts have taken note of this fact, since, under the rules of the Law of Partition, any member of a joint family who is removed more than three degrees from the common ancestor can claim a share on partition . 69 Occasionally, however, the family may include in the Hindu society four generations; and, of course, any number of members . 70 “Not only parents and children, brothers and step-brothers live on the common property, but it may sometimes include ascendants, descendants and collaterals upto many generations .” 71

All these members of the joint family lived under the same roof, and shared the property of the family in common , 72 and they do so even now in the more orthodox Hindu families and in the villages of India. Brihaspati speaks of the Hindu family as an association, the members of which share a common kitchen (ekapdkena vasatdm ). 73 The members performed their daily sacred sandhyd rites before the same fire, and the daily sacrifices and worship of fire used to be performed at the common hearth. Every member of the family has to undergo the Samskdras , the sacraments

prescribed by the Sdstras, for sanctifying the body; and the sacrificial rites at these samskdras are to be performed at the common fixe.

According to the Hindu Dharma-Sastra, the individual has to pass through many samskdras – sarira-samskdras as Manu and others have called them ; 74 for, these are intended to sanctify the body (iarJra) beginning from the moment the foetus is laid ( garbhddhdna ) to the death ( antyeshti ) of a person. Thus, they are supposed to purify ( pdvanah ) the person of a human being in this life and for the life after death . 75 Each of these samskdras is preceded by a symbolic sacrifice ( homa ). The number of these samskdras differs according to different authorities; the Grihya-Sutras enumerate

69. Jolly : Outlines of an History of the Hindu Law of Partition, Inheritance and Adoption , 1885, (Calcutta, Tagore Law Lectures), pp. 87 ff.

70. See Jolly : Hindu Law and Custom , p 168.

71. *ibid*, p. 168.

72. Nar. xiii, 38.

73. Bri, xxv, 6.

74. Man. ii, 27. 75. *ibid*.

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about forty; while the Gautama Dharma-Stitra names forty-eight. 7 ' 1 It will be sufficient for us to consider the more important of these in connection with our discussion. These are as follows: 77

(1) The garbhadhana or the foetus-laying ceremony is performed at the consummation of marriage. 78 This ceremony is in continuation of the pledge taken by the marrying parties at their wedding, viz. to fulfil the obligation of continuing the family line. Also, the mating of husband and wife as identified with the foetus-laying ceremony suggests that mating is conceived as a part of the obligations of the married couple towards the family and the community.

(2) The pum.savana samskara , or the 'male-making' rite is per-

formed during the third month of the wife's pregnancy. 79 It is intended to propitiate the deities which are supposed to govern the sex of the foetus, so that thereby a male issue may be born. The male issue is an important adjunct in the family; for he helps the continuity of the family. In view of this, we may say that in the pumsavana rite, the aim of mating is conceived as serving the welfare of the family, and through it, the welfare of the community.

(3) The jata-karma ceremony is performed at the birth of the child: Here the father touches and smells ( avaghrdnam ) the child and utters benedictory mantras into its ears, expressing his wish that it may be endowed with long life (ayus) and intelligence (medha). The child is then fed with honey and butter and is thereafter fed on the breast by the mother for the first time. 80 The umbilical cord of the child is cut after this. General care is taken to ensure the safety of the mother and the child.

(4) The nam.a-dheya rite is performed on the tenth or twelfth day after the birth of the child when it is given a name. The question of naming is important according to some authorities; and certain

76. These Samskaras are treated in minute and lengthy details in the Grihya-Sutras , for these texts are written with the special purpose of describing all the domestic ( gnhya ) rites

77. e.g. Man. ii, 26-28 ; cf. Yaj i, 10-13 78 See last chapter.

79. S.G.S. i, 20; As GS. i, 13; G. G S. ii, 6; H. G.S. u, 1, 2, etc. ; and in Yaj. i, 11. It is not mentioned by Manu

80. & G.S. i, 24 ; As G S. i, 15, 14 ; Par. G S. i t 16, 4, etc (The order of avaghrana , touching the child, uttering mantras , and feeding the child is not the same in all the Grihya-Sutras) .

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broad rules have to be followed here in order that the name may refer to the family, the community and the social class to which the person belongs. In Manu's opinion, for instance, the name given to the newborn baby should be such as to signify his varna. Thus the name of a Brahmana should denote something auspicious ( mungalyam ) and imply contentment ( sarmavat ); this last word is taken by some to mean, "ending in sarman ", as e.g., in 'Vishnu-Sarma\*. So again, the name of a Kshatriya should denote power

( bala ) and imply his duty of protection ( raksha ), as e.g., £ Bala-Varma . That of a Vaisya should denote wealth ( dhana ) and express prosperity ( pushti ), as eg., £ Vasu-Bhuti'. Lastly, a Sudra's name should denote something simple and humble ( jugupsitam ) and his duty of service ( preshy a-samyutam ) , as e.g. 'Dlna-Dasa\ The names of women should be easy to pronounce; they should not imply anything dreadful ( akruram ), possess a plain and unambiguous meaning ( vispashtartham ) , and must be pleasing and auspicious ( manoharam mangalyam ); besides they should end in long vowels and contain a term of benediction ( asirvadabhidhana-vat ) , as e.g., in the name 'Yasoda-devi'. 81

(5) The nishkramana ceremony is performed in the fourth month after the child's birth: Here the child is, as if, presented to the Sun; and thus its first contact with the greatest natural force that weilds power over the world, as also its first contact with the world outside the home, is ritually celebrated.

(6) The anna-prasana S2 (anna~boiled rice, cooked food; prasana= eating) rite is performed in the sixth month after birth. The child is now fed with cooked food for the first time. Here the problems of the upkeep and maintenance of the growing body of the child occupies the minds of the parents.

(7) The cl luda-karma, or the first tonsure of the hair, for the sake of dharma, sz is performed in the first or the third year, or at any age according to the tradition in the family. 84 This ceremony

81. See Man, ii, 31-33 ; and Kulluka's commentary thereon. Also c£ Par. G.S. i, 17 ; As, G.S. i, 15, 4-5.

82. It may be noted here that the Grihya-Sutras recommend flesh of different kinds of fowl and fish for the child at this ceremony – See &. G.S. i, 27, 2 ff. ; AS. G.S, i, 16, 3 ; Par, G.S. i. 19, 18 ff. etc.

83. 'dharmatah' dharmartham karyam – Kulluka on Man. ii.

84. Man, ii, 35 ; As. G.S. i, 17, 1 ; – yathd-kula-dharmam va.

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is perhaps intended to celebrate the child's introduction to the rules of bodily hygiene.

(8) The upanayana ceremony when the boy is initiated into the study of the Vedas, is performed at different ages for different varnas.<sup>85</sup> With this ceremony the boy is really accepted as a member of the group and of the spiritual life of the community to which his forefathers belong; for, from now onwards, he has a right to know and learn the well-preserved sacred lore of the community. He now enters the brahmachary asrama, i.e. the first asrama or stage of a life of dharma. In fact, the rite of upanayana heralds the second birth of the individual,<sup>86</sup> – the spiritual birth of the individual as a member proper of the group and its cultural heritage. It is therefore significant of the appellation dvi-jati (or dvi-yanman, or dvi-ja) i.e. ‘twice-born’ given to the members of the first three varnas, in that any one born within any of these varnas must, of necessity, go through the Upanayana rites. From now on, he begins his studies of vedas including vedangas for a certain period of years, which is different for different varnas, usually at the asrama (hermitage) of guru (teacher).

(9) The savitri is to be performed, according to the Gnhyasutras, immediately after the upanayana, or during the third year after upanayana; according to Manu, it is to be performed some time before the completion of the sixteenth year for a Brahmana, of twenty-second year in the case of a Kshatriya, and of twenty-fourth year in the case of a Vaisya.<sup>87</sup> This rite forms a part of the duties of brahmacharyasrama.<sup>88</sup>

(10) The samdvartana rite celebrates the return of the student to his ancestral home after the completion of his studies at the asrama of his guru. This samskara is the point, in the individual's career, which marks the completion of his education, and his fitness to enter into and accept the responsibilities of a family life.

(11) The vivaha (marriage) ceremony marks the individual's entry into the grihasthasrama. This ceremony may be said to seal the socialization proper of the individual; for here he takes the

85. See chapter iv. .

86 Man. ii, 68 : “*ft aupanayamko vidhih utpatti-vyanjakah*”, etc.

\* dvi = two ; jan = to be born.

87. Man. ii, 38.

88. See chapter iv.

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pledge to assist in the continuation of the race, and actually commences his efforts in that direction. Here, again, he accepts the fundamental doctrine of *yajna* in its fullest sense <sup>89</sup> ; he takes a vow, also, to keep on the home Fire ( *Agni* ) continuously alive.

(12) The *antyeshti* or the funeral rite, performed at death, marks the end of the human career of the individual, and his entrance into the realm of ancestors (*pitins*).

This whole series of sacraments has to be performed for the females also in order to sanctify the body ( *samskardrtham sariras - ya*), in their proper order and at proper times (*yatha-kalam yatha-kramam* ), but with this difference, that the sacred mantras are not to be recited on these occasions ( *amantnkd* ). <sup>90</sup> So also, so far as woman is concerned, the nuptial ceremony is to be regarded as equivalent to the Vaidika *samskdra* called *Upanayana* . <sup>91</sup> Thus, for a woman, devoted service of her husband is equivalent to residing at the Guru's home and serving him; and her devotion to various household duties is but the same as the worship of *Agni* (Sacred Fire). <sup>92</sup>

In the same way, the *Sudras*, like women, can go through these *samskdras*, without the recitation of sacred mantras <sup>93</sup>

All these *samskdras* are a part of 'varna-dharma' (the duties of the *varnas*) as well as of the *dsrama-dharma* (those of the *asrama*). While the *Varna-* scheme approaches the task of regulating the social life of the individual through the community as a whole in the main, the *Asrama* scheme is essentially devised to the same end, but approaches the task from the individual's side. And between these two stand the *samskdras* , through which the individual becomes, from stage to stage, organised and disciplined into a more and more perfect social being till he retires from active life. Thus, the natural man is raised to the fullest social status step by step, till *vivdha*, when the orbit of his life becomes essentially dedicated to the service of social ends; hereafter, till he retires from his duties as a householder, he is pledged to produce

<sup>89</sup>. See next section.

<sup>90</sup>. *Man.* ii, 66. See also *As. G.S.* i, 15, 10 ; 16, 6 ; 17, 19 ; *Yaj.* i, 13.

<sup>91</sup>. *Man.* ii, 67 ; *Yaj.* i, 13.

<sup>92</sup>. *ibid.*

93 See Man. x, 127 ; Yaj. i, 121.

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worthy progeny, which becomes the joint duty and interest of the m.a and his wife for which the two have become united.

And yet, while all efforts are made towards the socialisation of the man, the care of the man himself as a unique individual is not lost sight of. There are several modes and means, prescribed by the Dharma-Sastras, with the help of which the individual is expected to cultivate his personality in spite of, apart from, and yet in the midst of a life that is pledged to serve social ends. This is especially apparent from the fact that after all grihasthdharma has to be pursued only as a stage and step to secure the entrance into the next dsrama of vdnaprastha and from thence into the samnydsa , 94

The various samskaras performed in the first half of a man's life are so many stages for the individual in the process of his socialization. All the ritual and ceremonies at these samskaras have a reference to the socialization of the individual. The individual is, as it were, carried over from one experience to another in the course of his life, in order that he may feel himself more and more at one with the community of which he is a part. These rituals and ceremonies are common to all members of the Hindu community; thus they signify the common bonds that hold the members of the community together.

The sa7nskdras and the elaborate ceremonies performed in association with them signify, both to the individual as well as to the community, that something important is coming to happen to the individual on these particular occasions, in which both the community as well as the individual have their mterests. Thus, the Upanayana ceremony, for instance, of which we have already spoken in Ch. IV and above, signifies that the individual is now to prepare himself to learn the community lore, for his own good as well as for that of the community. The very elaborate ceremony of vivaha again, signifies the most important step taken by the individual for the welfare of the community, in that he accepts the responsibility of reproducing for the increase of the strength of the community. And it also signifies a very important step taken by the individual for his own good, in that he shows readiness to start grihasthdsrama , and, through it seeks to accumulate dharma for his



94. See Chapter III on the Asramas

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future welfare towards moksa. The rituals thus signify that the individual is being entrusted with certain obligations and responsibilities for his own welfare as well as for the good of the community, from which latter obligations and responsibilities he was so far free.

III

We shall now proceed to consider specific mores of relations of the members of the Hindu family with each other and with the family. Thus we shall have to consider the relations of the husband, the wife, the son, the daughter, and the parents with each other and of each of these with the rest of the members of the family.

1

Regarding the mutual relations between the husband and the wife, the Manu-Smṛiti has declared that mutual fidelity till death is the "summary" of the highest dharma for husband and wife . 95 Manu further adds that once they are united by the nuptial ceremony, they must always exert themselves to see that they are never at variance with each other, and that they ever remain faithful to each other . 96 The true goal of marriage lies in "the consciousness of a permanent and unbreakable friendship ," 97 as Urwick would say; this cannot be reached unless marriage itself is made unbreakable. The natural basis of the family is the care of the young; 98 that is the primary function of the family. "The normal function of the family is to secure what is best, or the best available for the nurture of the children, with a view to their preparation as citizens of a larger community ." 99 The monogamic family,

95. Man. ix, 101 : Anyonyasydvabhichāro bhaved amaranantikah / esha dharmah samasena jneyah stri-pumsayoh punah / /

96. Man. ix, 102 : Tatthā nityam yateyatdm stn-pumsau tu krita-kriyau/yathā nabhicharetam tau viyuktavitaretaram/ / esha stn-

pumsayor ukto dharmo vo rati-sanihitah/ /

97. TFrwick: "The Social Good", p. 137.

98. J. S. Mackenzie : Outlines of Social Philosophy , p. 77, London :

Allen & Unwin, 1918 ; Reprinted 1952. 99. *ibid.* p. 80.

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it follows therefore, is the natural form of association, "being the only one in which both the parents can normally devote themselves whole-heartedly, and with cordial co-operation to the necessary task , 100 of taking care of the young. The Hindu writers have devoted much of their energy not only in praising monogamy (one wife at a time), but they have gone further in eulogising life-long union of one man to one woman, such that after the death of either, the survivor remains single and faithful to his or her memory (i.e. *ekachdmtva* or *ekapatnivrata*) . The epic story of Rama is an example of such ideal realised. So again, is the story of King Aja in Kalidasa's well known epic \* *Raghu-varma* ?. The Dharma-Sastras of Manu and Yajnavalkya instruct the husband to be devoted solely to his wife . 101 He should respect her and please her . 102 Vatsyayana also speaks of the husband devoted to one wife in highly eulogistic terms . 103 The Mahdbharata gives similar instructions to the husband as the Smritis . 104 All the daily sacrificial rites, designed to ensure happiness after death, have to be performed by man and wife together . 105 In the family, the husband ought to exert himself to live in harmony with his wife and children . 106 The home, in which the husband is always pleased with his wife as well as the wife always feels pleased with her husband, is indeed the most blessed home . 107 Man is only half human,, not complete, until he marries and begets children; then only he becomes a full man . 108

The primary object of marriage is the continuity of the family line, according to the Smritis . 109 And therefore, if the first marriage of a man does not succeed in this objective he is permitted to marry again even while the first wife is alive. Vatsyayana observes that the wife who bears no child may herself advise her husband to marry another woman; and he advises such a first wife to regard

10D *ibid.* . p. 77. 10k Man. hi, 45 ; Yai, 1, 81.

102. Man. iii, 55-60 ; Yaj. i, 82, 103. Kam. i, 3, 4.

104. Mah&. Anil. 46— the whole Adhyaya.

105. Man. ix, 196. 106. Man. ix, 45; Ap. ii, 1\* 1« :

107. Man. iii, 60: santushto bharyaya bharta bhartra bharya  
tathaiva cha/yasminneva kule nityam kalydnam tatra t mi dhruvam/ /

108. Sat. Br. v, 1, 6, 10.

109. Y5j. i, 78 ; Ap. ii, 5, 11, 12 ; etc.

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the second wife as her younger sister . 110 The Smntis urge that the husband should not marry another wife if his first wife is able to share in the performance of his religious obligations, and has also borne him sons . 111 The wife of the same varna as the husband only can personally share with her husband and assist him m the performance of religious rites . 112 Such a wife, if she is kind to her husband and virtuous m her conduct, must never be shown disrespect by her husband by marrying another woman . 113 He may, however, marry another woman if the first wife gives her consent to do so . 114

Ordinarily, divorce is not known to the Hindu institution of marriage. Husband and wife are bound to each other, not only “till death”, but even after death, m the other world 11,3 But, the Ariha-Sastra makes mention of dissolution of marriage (mok(a) in the case of marriages, viz., the Brahma , Daiva , Arsha, and PrajBpat-  
yo. UG Such dissolution of marriages when these marriages had taken place under forms other than these four, again, cannot be avaded of against the will of the two parties It is available only on the ground of enmity of the parties towards each other 117

As regards the husband’s authority over his wife, we must not consider this in isolation from certain other aspects which are connected with it. It is along with the obligations and duties of the husband towards the wife as the complementary aspect of his authority over her that we must consider the Hindu husband’s “dominion” over his wife. He is the lord and master of his wife

and as such he should be adored by her, even though he is devoid of virtues . 118 On his side, however, he should realize that pleasure,

110. Kam. iv, 2, 1-5.

111. Yaj. i, 73 ; 76 ; Ap. ii, 5, 11, 12 ; cf. Man. ix, 95 ; 80 ; 81.

112. Man. ix, 86 ; Yaj i, 88

113. Man. ix, 82.

114. ibid.

115. Man. v, 160-1 ; 164 ; Suk. Ni. iv, 4, 57-9 ; Kat. 837 (Kane's Ed.) ; also Rama, ii, 29, 17-18 \* "She who is given away as wife by her father to the man, with due ceremonies belonging to each class by touching holy water, belongs to him even in her life in the next world/'

116. Arth. p. 177.

117. Arth. p. 176.

118. Man. v, 147-54 ; Yaj. i, 77 ; Vis. xxv, 12-14.

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harmony as well as dharma depends upon her, and so he should never get cross with her even though she may happen to do so . 119 He is her guardian in her youth, just as- her father guards her in childhood, and her sons are bound to do in her old age . 120 The husband is known as Bhartri , 121 because he is the support of his wife; and he is known as Pati 122 because he has to protect her. m When he fails to discharge these two functions, he ceases to be both Bhartri and Pati. 12 \* "This eternal course of dharma is ever followed by righteous men, - viz., that the husband, however weak he might be, ought to protect his wedded wife ." 125 For, by protecting one's wife, one protects one's own offspring; and, by protecting the offspring, one protects one's own self . 126

The wife is known as the Jaya, because one's own self is begotten on her . 127 It is further ordained that the woman whose hand is accepted in marriage should be treated with respect and kindness; and all that is agreeable to her should be given her. 12v

So also, her elder relatives-in-law, namely, father-in-law, the brother-in-law, the mother-in-law are exhorted to please her with affection ; 129 for she is the cause of the begetting of offsprings, their nurture and the fulfilment of other factors, so necessary for the good of society . 130 By cherishing woman, one but virtually worships the goddess of prosperity herself; by afflicting her, one but afflicts the goddess of prosperity . 131 A man's half is his wife; the wife is her husband's best of friends; the wife is the source of Dharma, Artha and Kama; and she is also the source of Moksa . 1 \*  
 "No man, even when he is in temper, should ever do anything that is disagreeable to his wife. For happiness, joy, virtue – all depend upon the wife ." 133

119. Maha. Adi. 98, 39 ; Avnyokto'pi ddranam na bruyad apnyam  
 budhah/ratim pritim cho dhartnam cha taddy attain avekshya cha/ /

120. Man. ix, 3.

121. From 'bhrt\*– ' to support\* or \*to maintain\*.

122. From 'pd\*-- to 'protect\* or 'guard\*.

123. Maha. Adi. 104, 28. 124. Maha. Sant>. 266. 3?.

125. Ban. 12, 68. 126 ibid. 12, 69.

127. ibid. 12, 70– (from 'jan'– to beget)

128-129. Maha. Anu. 46, 1-13.

130-131. ibid.

132. Maha. Adi. 74, 40.

133. Maha. Adi. 74, 50.

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Further, in the Mahabharata, the wise and learned Bhishma gives a piece of sound advice to the husband in regard to his manner of behaviour in the family. "A householder should be satisfied with his own married wife", says he . 134 He should avoid any act such as may cause a breach of peace in the family. He should never fall out with his kinsmen in the family, his brothers, sons, wife, daughter and even his 'servants . 135 "With endurance," he

should “bear without excitement or anxiety every sort of annoyance, and even censure” from these members of the family . 136 In general, in family affairs, “he should keep self-controlled; he should avoid malice and curb his senses .” 137 The unity and harmony of family-life is well brought out in the following passage: “The eldest brother is like a father (to all his younger brothers); the wife and the sons are but one’s own body; one’s menial servants are, as it were, one’s shadow; and the daughter is an object of profound love .” 138

Narada forbids the husband and the wife even from ever bringing their quarrels to the notice of their relatives, or the king, 139 – (i.e., perhaps, to the Court for redress or trial).

The Mahdnirvanatantra gives the husband another striking piece of advice with regard to the treatment to his wife: He should never punish her; rather, he should always protect her with the respect due to his mother (mdtrivat). A virtuous wife who dearly loves her husband ( sadhvi pati-vrata) should never be abandoned, even if the husband happens to be in grave peril . 140

Yajnavalkya, in the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad , has clearly brought out the psychological unity of man and wife in the family. He explains that man, who was originally one, cleft himself into two, because he felt no pleasure in the loneliness, and wished for a second; these two became the husband and wife. The two separately, he says, are like half of a shell, each; together, they are one whole . 141 We are told in the Ramayana that the learned sage and Royal Adviser Vasishtha asked Sita to remain at home while her husband Crown Prince Rama would go to forest to fulfil his

134. Santi. 243, 14. 135. ibid. 243, 15-16,

136. ibid. 243, 21. 137. ibid. 243, 14.

138. ibid 243, 20. 139 Nar. xii, 89.

140. Mdhdnirvdnatantra t viii, 39.

141. Br. Up. 1, 4, 3.

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father’s promise, and to rule the kingdom in Rama’s place; for, he

argued, "the wife is the very soul (true representative) of him who marries her." 142 This interpretation of the unity of the husband and wife, whereby the wife is to be looked upon as the husband's deputy, possessing all the authority and carrying out all the duties and responsibilities of the husband during his absence even in such important matters as ruling an empire and all that this involves, is indeed a most significant interpretation. It is further significant to note that Sita was prevailed upon to take over her husband's duties and authority even though he had three younger brothers.

Here we may also remind ourselves of the ceremonies centering round the *svaha*, especially the *sapta-padi* mantras in which the bride and the groom walk together before the nuptial altar over seven heaps of rice. 143 The whole ceremony of marriage, indeed, is significant in connection with our present discussion; but the *sapta-padi* rite is specially so, because the seven pledges which the bride takes here perhaps best summarize the whole psychology underlying mutual relationship between the husband and the wife in the family.

2

Next we consider the position of the wife in the Hindu family. In the family, the wife comes as a stranger. All the other members of the family have already imbibed the family traditions, customs and usages; and the family sentiments have become quite a part of their lives. The newly-wedded wife, on the contrary, is in these respects a perfect stranger in the family. Her first important duty on entering her new home, therefore, would be to exert towards adapting herself to the traditions and sentiments of the house of which she now becomes a member. A true adaptation, however, would become the most difficult task if it is one-sided only; it is desirable that the other members of the household too should attempt to be of real help to the newcomer. They have to take a lenient view of her acts of omission and commission until she has become acclimatized to the new atmosphere. The greater part of

142. Rama, ii, 37, 23-24.

143. See ch. v.

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this responsibility, which falls on the shoulders of the members of the family, has naturally to be shared by the husband. We have already seen what the Mahdbhdrata has to say regarding the husband's part in this matter . 144 In the same passage, the parents-in-law and other relatives-in-law of the new bride are called upon to treat her with respect and kindness, if they desire for happiness in the family; "for such conduct on their part always produces considerable happiness and advantage ." 145 The wife is "a friend bestowed on man by Destiny", says Yudhisthira to the Yaksha . 146 The wife of King DaSaratha, in the Rdmdyana, is described as being to him like "a friend, wife, sister and mother" as well . 147 On occasions of joy, the wife who has 'a sweet tongue is like a friend who increases the joy by sharing it with her husband; on religious occasions, she is to him what a father should be; in times of distress and worry, she is to him what a mother would prove to be . 148

The Mahabharata declares that in truth, a householder's home, even if crowded with sons, grandsons, daughters-in-law and servants, is virtually a lonely place for him to live, if there is no housewife . 149 One's home is not the house made of brick and mortar; it is the wife who makes the home. A home without the wife is like a wilderness . 150

144. Maha. Anu. 46, 1-13, (See above, footnotes 128-131), etc.

145. Anu. 46, 3. 146. Maha. Vana. 373, 72.

147. Hama, ii, 12, 68-69. 148. Maha. Adi. 74, 72.

149. Mah§. Santi. 144, 5 :

putra-pautra-vadhu-bhrityair-dkirnam api sarvatah /  
bhdrya-hinam gnhasthasya sunyam eva griham bhavet/

150. ibid. 144, 6:

na griham griham ityahur grihinl griham uchyate/  
griham tu grihini-hinam aranya-sadrisam mat am/ /

See also ibid. 144, 12-17 :

vriksa-mule'pi dayita yasya tishthati tad griham /  
prasado\* pi tayd hinah kdntara iti nischitam / /  
dharmarthakama-kdleshu bharya pumsah sahayint /  
videsha-gamane chasya saiva visvasa-karika/ /  
bharya hi paramo hyarthah purushasyeha pathyate/  
a-sahayasya loke'smin loka-yatra-sahayirii/ /  
nasti bharya-samo bandhur ndsti bharya- sama gatih/  
ndsti bharya-samo ioke sahdyr dharma-samgrahe f /



yasya bharya grihe ndsti sddhvi cha priya-vadini/  
aranyam tena gantavyam yathdranyam tathd griham / /

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Thus, the very important part played by the wife, has received great attention by Hindu writers. The husband's true attitude towards his wife cannot be better described than what is done by the poet Kalidasa in RaghuvamJa wherein King Aja laments for his deceased wife thus: "She was my grihini (the lady of the house), my wise counsellor in intellectual matters ( sachivah ) , my confidante ( sakhi ) in private, and my dearest disciple in the pursuit of the arts ." 161

All this clearly shows what part the husband is expected to play in relation to his wife. Out of all the relatives by marriage, the husband is the wife's nearest relation. In the task of her adaptation to the family life his co-operation must naturally be the most helpful to her. Of all the family members, it is the husband, first and foremost, who is expected to give the wife a response of heart and mind. And no unity between man and woman can be perfect without the psychological concord of their spirit and emotions. Each must go out in sympathy to the other; each must give the greater part of her or his affection to the other; and, each must, in fact, in every possible way, try to be perfect psychological complement of the other.

And yet, though the Hindu writers expect much from the husband in this direction of mutual sympathy, mutual affection, and mutual congeniality, a great deal is also expected by them of the wife. The wife herself seems to be held by them to be the most responsible of all for her own adaptability into the family. Thus, the mistress of the house is asked by Manu and other Smriti writers to obey her lord as long as he lives, and remain faithful to his memory after his death . 362 They sometimes go even farther than that; they declare that she should worship him as a deity even though he happens to be a man of bad character and has no good quality in him . 153 Brihaspati says that the wife, who feels afflicted when her husband is afflicted, and feels happy when he is happy, is the truly devoted wife of her husband . 154 Woman is "the goddess of fortune" in the family, because, she can make or mar the

151. Raghu. viii, 67 : grihirii sachivah sakhi mithah, pnya~&ishy&laUte kaldvidhau /

152. Man. v, 151 ; Yaj. i, 75 ; 83 ; Vis. xxv, 13-14.

153. Man. i, 154-6 ; Yaj. i, 77 ; Vis. xxv, 15 ; Kṣt. 836.

154. Brih. Smr. xxiv, 8.

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happiness of the family . 155 She is the immediate person concerned with the nurture and bringing up of the children; so, she plays the most important part in the family life . 150 On the lady of the house alone, says Manu, depends the due performance of all acts of dharma (dharma-karyani ) , heavenly bliss for oneself and one's ancestors, the due care of the offspring, and, on the whole, "the highest conjugal happiness " 157 (ratir uttayna). It falls to her lot, therefore, as her important responsibility, to maintain peace in the house and promote happiness in the family. She must do her utmost towards conducting the affairs of the family smoothly by keeping under control her thought, speech and actions (mano-vag-deha-samyata) and by doing her duty towards her husband . 158 Such a wife is called a sadhvi, a virtuous and chaste woman, in this world 159

As a wife, woman has to subject herself to the authority of her husband . 100 She should never, in the opinion of Manu, do anything that might displease him, whether he be alive or dead . 101 As the mistress of the house, she should always possess a cheerful temperament, managing her household affairs cleverly and efficiently, and spending economically . 162 Vyasa gives a similar account of the house-wife's typical duties: She is to rise up early in the morning before her husband, take her bath, and clean the house, the yard of the house\* and the utensils of cookery. Then she is to light the fire in the oven, make arrangements for different kinds of tasty dishes for the day, give the servants orders of their work for the day, and make out an estimate of the expenses necessary for the day. She should then pay her respects to the elders in the house. After the meals are prepared, she should first serve the children in the family, then her husband and afterwards take her meals. After the meals are over, she should prepare the daily account of

155. Man. ix, 26.

156. Man. ix, 27 : utpadanam apatyasya jatasya pari-palanam/  
pratyaham loka-yatraydh pratyaksham stri-nibandhanam/ '

157. Man. ix, 2, 8.

158. Man. ix, 29 and v, 165 (both identical).

159. *ibid.*

160. Man. v, 148-9 ; Yaj. i, 85-6 ; Gukr. NI. iv, 4, 25 ; Vis. xxv, 13 ; Bau. ii, 3, 45 ; Vas. v, 3.

161. Man. v, 156.

162. Man. v, 150; Yaj. i, 83; Vas. xxv, 4-6.

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the family income and expenses . 163 Vatsyayana agrees with the Smritis in regard to the duties of the lady of the house . 164 He advises her to exert herself towards gaining the full confidence of ' her husband ; 165 she should obey her husband's elder relations and behave courteously towards the servants of the family 166 "If the husband sins against her, let her be indeed a little angry and scold him, but not too much ." 167 She may engage herself in amusements of every description, but only so far as may please her husband . 168 "Angry words, angry looks, speaking with averted head, standing at the door and looking out, talking in the garden, remaining long in a place apart – all these things let her shun ; 169 she is not to go out of the house without the husband's permission ; 170 and, if the husband is used to spending too much money, or not spending wisely, let her tell him of that in private ." 171

The Mahabharata also outlines similarly the duties and the attitude of the wife to the husband. Bhishma reports a conversation between two women Sumana and Sandill. The former wanted to know by what penances the latter was able to attain celestial regions. Sandill replied that it was not by virtue of any hard penances at all; but, by virtue of her obedience and devotion to her husband she was able to achieve paradise . 172 In the Vanaparva section, Krishna's wife Satyawati desires to know of Draupadi how she was able to "rule the sons of Pandu", her five husbands . 173 How was it that they were so obedient to her and were never cross with her ? 174 Satyawati thought it was all due probably to some magic power which Draupadi possessed! Draupadi, however, assured her that it was all entirely due to her obedience and devotion to her husbands. She took her bath, ate and slept after her husbands, and after all the servants and attendants . 175 She was

163. Vyasa. Smr. ii, 20 ff.

164. Kam. iv, 1, 1-55 ; – Peterson's Tr. in  
ii. No. 7 (1891), pp. 456-66.

165 .

ibid, v, i.

166.

167.

ibid, v, 19.

168.

169 .

ibid, v, 22.

170.

171.

ibid, v, 14.

172.

173.

Maha. Vana. 232, 4.

174.

ibid. 5-6.

175.

ibid. 24.

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ibid, v, 37.

ibid, v, 16.

ibid, v, 25.

Maha. Anu. 23.

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always engaged in assisting her husbands . 176 She renounced whatever her husbands did not enjoy . 177 In her opinion, “the husband is wife’s god; he is her (sole) refuge;. . .My husbands have become pleased with me and are at my beck and call on account of my diligence, my alacrity, and the humility with which I serve my elders .” 178

The Ramayana is full of incidents of the wife’s devotion to her husband, its heroine Sita being herself the chief object of the poet’s eulogy. Sita says that in this world, the wife is the sharer of her husband’s destiny; all other relatives are each responsible for his or her own destiny only . 179 The husband is indeed a Deity for the wife . 180 “Women who love their husbands, – whether he treats them well or ill, whether he lives in the city or in forest, – attain high status; and, the husband, whether wicked or lustful, is the highest God to the wife of good morals .” 181

There is of course the more mundane aspect of the duties of the mistress of the house: She is held responsible for the general comfort of all the members of the family. Manu observes that she should undertake the management of household affairs, collection and expenditure of her husband’s wealth, preparing for food, keeping everything clean in the house, and fulfilling all the dharma obligations . 182 She should not sleep at odd hours; nor should she wander about mixing with wicked people; nor should she ever drink intoxicating liquors . 188 She should rise before the other members of the house and pay her respects to the elder members of the family . 184 She should be always cheerful, and should manage the affairs of the family with cleverness ; 185 and, she has to take care to keep everything clean in the home, and should be economical in regard to expenditure . 186 In this regard, Draupadi explains how she followed this duty of the wife as the manager of household affairs. She used to keep all articles and utensils and food in the

176. ibid. 29. 177. ibid. 32.

178. ibid. 37 and 39. 179. Rama, ii, 27, 4-18.

180. Rama, ii, 39, 3L 181. Rama, ii, 117, 22-28.

182. Man. ix, 10-1L

183. Man. ix, 13 ; also Br. Smr. xxiv, 7.

184. Br. Smr. xxiv, 7. \*

185. Man. v, 150. 186. *ibid.*

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house clean, to prepare food at the proper hour, to offer the religious oblations and worship, and to look to the comforts of the guests of the house . 187 Draupadi, indeed, with pride, claims that she alone knew, better than any one else, about what the servants, attendants, and even the cow-herds and shepherds in her palace did and what they did not do; in fact, she alone had the fullest knowledge of the confidential details of the wealth and the income and expenditure of the huge royal establishment of her lord . 188 This illustrates the Hindu conception of the wife's duties and responsibilities in the family . 189

Vatsyayana, speaking about the duties of a Hindu wife, likewise describes her as the manager of the home; the wife must look after the household work and arrangements ; 190 she is to make purchases of things of domestic necessity, like utensils, oil, salt, drugs etc .; 101 and she has also to keep accounts of income and expenditure, and check them . 192 Vatsyayana also says that the lady of the house should maintain good garden for vegetables to be used in the kitchen, as well as a garden for fruits and flowers . 193 In the drama *Sakuntalam* of Kalidasa, the sage Kanva's advice to his adopted daughter Sakuntala, on the eve of her departure for her husband's abode, is similar; Sakuntala is advised by the sage to obey her husband's parents and behave courteously with servants; and above all, says he "do not fall out with your husband even if he happens to insult you ." 194

In the *Suhra-Niti* s we find almost similar account of the duties of a housewife . 195 She is expected to get up before her husband, clean all utensils, sweep the house, pay her respects to the elders in the family, cook the food, and so on. Women, according to *Sukra-Niti*, have no separate right to the use of means for the

187. Maha. Van. 232 and 233. 183. *ibid*.

189. Cf also similar enumeration of the housewife's duties given by Harita, in Colebrooke's "Digest", Bk. iii, Ch. ii, Sect 1, p. 141, *cii*. (Quoted in S. C. Vidyarnava's "Yajnavalkyasmṛiti", pp. 147-48).

190. Kam. iv, 1, 3 ; cf. Rati-sdstra f vii.

191. *ibid*, w, 26-28 ; cf. Rati-iastra , *ibid*.

192. *ibid*, v, 32 ; cf. Rati-sastra , *ibid*.

193. *ibid*, w, 6-8. .

194. Peterson infers that Kalidasa is quoting Vatsyayana here.

195. &ukra-Nx. iv, 11 to 65.

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realization of the three-fold aims of life – Dharma , Artha and Kama – except in terms of service of the home and the husband . 196 "The wife should be pure in mind, speech and action; she should abide by the instructions of her husband, and follow him like a pure shadow; she must be a friend in all his good activities, and a servant at all his commands 4 . ,>197 In the home she should be sweet and gentle in speech, and courteous in behaviour . 198 "The father gives measured things, the brother and son also give only limited things. Who does not worship the husband who is the giver of everything ?" 199 The wife should practise music and gentle manners, "according as the husband is master of these, and thus practise the fine arts of winning over, with regard to him ." 200

Under the Hindu ideal of marriage, man and wife become united according to the sacred mantras and rituals with the blessings of the gods. Indeed, in the Mahdbhdrata we are told that "According to the injunctions of the sastras , the husband should regard his wife as an acquisition due to his own pristine deeds or what has been ordained by God ." 201 "The husband is declared to be one with his wife", says Manu. He adds also, that "he only is the perfect man who consists of three persons united viz., his wife, his offspring and himself ." 202 'Mutual fidelity till death\* is, in Manu's opinion, the summary of the highest law for the husband and wife to follow . 203 The harmony of intellect and

feeling between the two chief members of the family is of supreme importance in the view of Hindu writers on the subject. The sapta~ pads brings forth most vividly the full significance of this intellectual and emotional unity of the married couple. This psycho-moral harmony is further emphasized by the fact that all daily rites and dharmika duties to be performed in order to win happiness here and hereafter have to be performed by man and wife together . 204 Brihaspati speaks of the wife as saha-dharma-charini i.e., one who participates with her husband in the pursuit of dharmay and also as ardhangt 3 i.e., half the being of her husband . 205

196.

ibid. 11.

197.

ibid. 23-25.

198.

ibid. 37-42.

199.

ibid. 64-65.

200.

ibid. 55-56.

201.

Maha. Anu. 44, 27.

202.

Man. ix, 45 ; also Ap. ■

ii, 14, 16.

203.

Man. ix, 101-103

204.

Man. ix, 96.



205.

Brihas. xxiv, 10-11.

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The Smritis and the Mahdharata refer to the wife by the name Jayd ? because, according to them the husband becomes an embryo and is born again (layate) of his wife as her son. 20 ° Every family has to take care that its offsprings are of pure blood. Moksa is obtained through sons and grandsons. Continuity of the family line in this world (ananiyam loke ) was the main object of taking a wife; and with this primary aim of marriage in view, the husband should carefully guard the wife so that the children born out of the union are of pure blood . 207 If the wife is not well guarded, she may bring disgrace on both the families, her husband's as well as her father's . 208 By carefully guarding the wife, the husband is able to preserve the purity of his offspring, his family, himself, and his means of acquiring dharma 20 \* The use of force is inadvisable in guarding women; moreover, man will not be able to guard them completely by force . 210 Manu suggests that instead of using force against his wife, the husband should try to keep her engaged in the management of the household affairs, so that she may not get idle moments for thinking of or doing any undesirable or shameful act . 211 Thus, for Manu and Bhāspati, the management of household affairs, as we have described before , 212 is in a way, a means of engaging the wife's mind which may otherwise be led astray, since "the empty mind", as they say, "is the devil's workshop."

This reminds us of Charles Cooley's remarks: "Nothing works more for sanity and contentment than a reasonable amount of necessary and absorbing labour; disciplining the mind and giving one a sense of being of use in the world. It seems a paradox to say that idleness is exhausting, but there is much truth in it, especially in the case of sensitive and eager spirits. A regular and necessary task rests the will by giving it assurance, while the absence of such a task wearies it by uncertainty and futile choice. Just as a person who follows a trail through the woods will go

206. Man. ix, 8 ; Yaj. i, 56 ; Maha. Van. 22, 70.

207. Yaj. i, 78 ; Ap. ii, 5, 11. 12 ; and Maha. Adi. 74, 35.

208. Man. ix, 5.

209. Man, ix, 7.

210. Man. ix, 10.

211. Man. ix, 10-11 ; also Br. Sm. xxii, 4.

212. See above.

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further with less exertion than one who is finding his way, so we all need a foundation of routine, and the lack of this among women of the richer classes is a chief cause of the restless, exacting, often hysterical spirit harassing to its owner and every one else, which tends towards discontent, indiscretion and divorce ." 213 The Mahd-bharata, the Rdmdyana and Vatsyayana's Kama-Sutra and the other Jastara writers, however, do not refer to any such motive specifically when they prescribe similar duties for the lady of the house.

Of the very high value placed on the virtue of chastity in women, numerous instances could be adduced from the Epics and other works. After the death of the husband, remark Manu and Yajna-vaalkya, the wife must not even mention the name of another man . 214 The woman who is unfaithful to her husband suffers disgrace in this world; and, after death, she loses her place by the side of her husband in heaven . 215 But the wife who maintains chastity (brahma charya) after her husband's death attains heaven even though she has no son 216

But even here, as in some other cases also when we examine the Dhamna-Sdstras , we are not treading on smooth grounds free from opposing viewpoints. For, the Smritis, at certain places, also require the husband to keep a distance between himself and his wife. For instance, he is not to eat in the company of his wife, nor is he to look at her when she is eating, sneezing, yawning, or sitting at ease . 217 On the other hand, the descriptions in the epics and poetry and drama speak of the housewife as taking part in the husband's affairs on terms of equality. The verse in the Raghu-vamsa already quoted , 218 for instance, is quite in contradiction to such injunctions of the Smritis . In Vatsyayana's opinion, the wife could take the liberty of rebuking her husband, if he is a spend-thrift, or, again, if he commits any wrong against her . 219 In the

213. Cooley : “ Social Organization” , p. 368.

214. Man. v, 157 ; Yaj. i, 75, 77.

215. Man. v, 161 ; 164 ; Vas. xxi, 14.

216. Man. v, 160 ; Yaj. i, 75 ; Sukr. iv, 4, 57-59 ; Kat 837 Vis. xxv, 17 ; Par. iv, 26.

217. Man. iv, 43 ; Yaj. i, 131 ; Vis. Ixviii, 46 ; Vas. xii, 31 ; Gaut. ix, 32.

218. Grihinl sachivak sakhl mithah , priya-Hshya lalite kaldvidhau/  
see above.

219. Ram., op. cit, (Peterson) verses 19 and 14.

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Mdhabharata, Draupadl’s advice to her husband Yudhishthira, on what his duty was and what it was not, at the time when he declared his intention to renounce worldly engagements and lead an ascetic life, clearly indicates her status of the wife as the advisor of her husband . 220 She even goes to the extent of rebuking him for making his brothers and herself suffer the tortures of forest life, though the rebuke is couched in “soothing and sweet words”, as the narrator Vaisampayana puts it. “Why... did you say to

these brothers, then living with you”, she demands, “ these

words, viz., ‘we will kill Duryodhana and enjoy ruling the Earth’? Having yourself said these words to your brothers then, why do you depress our hearts now ?” 221

Of course, equality of status did not imply identity of rights and functions of the man and the wife. It meant that each of the two was recognized as possessing equal importance as a member jointly in charge of the home. The functions, and therefore also the rights and privileges, of the two sexes towards each other were always considered to be dissimilar in nature. Nevertheless, there was no distinction of degree, in terms of higher and lower’, superior and inferior, between them. There was only a distinction of kind. And in the drama of family life, woman’s place was on the whole as high as man’s according to most authorities.

Manu declares that a wife can never be released (vimuchyate) by repudiation . 222 But the husband may abandon (tyayet) his wife, only in case she possesses some blemish, disease, or faults which were not disclosed to him before marriage . 223 Even if she hate him, he is not allowed to abandon her immediately. He has to bear with her at least for one year; and if she continues ,to hate him even after that period, he may deprive her of her property, and cease to cohabit with her ; 224 she must, even then, however, be maintained by him. If she shows disrespect for the husband who has some vice, or who is given to drinking, she shall be abandoned only for three months and shall be deprived of her ornaments and furniture . 225 But a wife cannot be cast off if she shows disrespect, or even aversion, to her husband who is insane (unmatta ) , or a

220. Maha. Stati. 14, 6-37. 221. ibid. 7 and 11. \_

222. Man. ix, 46. 223. Man. ix, 72 ; Yaj. i, 66.

224. Man. ix, 77 ; and comm, by Kulluka. 225. Man. ix, 78

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eunuch, or who is destitute of manly strength (abjjam), or who is suffering from serious disease (papa-rogwam) . 226

Vasistha and Yajnavalkya, however, give us somewhat different regulations in connection with abandonment or desertion of a wife. They are not in favour of the husband abandoning her except in- cases of certain very serious offences. She shall be abandoned = only if she commits adultery with her husband's pupil or his teacher, or with a man of low caste . 227 In no other case should she be absolutely abandoned according to these Snuntis. The wife who proves unfaithful otherwise than in the cases mentioned above should be deprived of her authority and allowed only sufficient food to maintain her body; she should be treated with disdain and made to sleep on bare ground . 228 But after one month of suffering of this punishment, says Vasishtha, she becomes purged of the sin . 229 Even if she has committed a sin, or if she is quarrelsome, or has left the house, or if she has suffered criminal force, or has fallen into the hands of thieves, the wife must not be abandoned; the\* husband should wait till her courses appear, because by her temporary uncleanness of the menstruation period she becomes pure afterwards when the courses have ceased and after she has taken a bath 230 Says Yajnavalkya: "Women are pure in

all limbs; they never become entirely foul; they are purified of all their sins every month by their temporary uncleanness; they are always pure, whatever offences they commit .” 231

3

The sastras have given detailed instructions in regard to the days after a woman's monthly sickness during which period only she is supposed to be able to conceive a child . 232 And a married

226. Man. ix, 79. 227. Yaj. i, 27 ; Vas. xxi, 9 ; cl Man. ix, 80.

228. Yaj. i, 70; Vas. xxi, 6.

229. Vas. xxi, 6. 230. Vas. xxviii, 9 and 4.

231. Yaj. i, 71-72 ; also Vas. xxviii, 9 and 4 ; cl Vis. xxiii, 40 ; Baudh. ii, 2, 4, 4.

232. Man. iii, 45 ; ritu-kalabhigami sy&t ; also in Garu G. S. iv, 11, 17 ; Par. G.S. i, 11, 7-8 ; Ap. G.S. ii, 1, 17-18 ; Y&j. i, 79-81 ; Vas. xii, 21-24; cl Kurina Pura. i, 2, 15, 11 Critu-kalabhigamt syat ydvat putro'bhiidyate > ) ; etc.

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couple is enjoined to desist from sexual union on days other than these. Besides, even on these days, they are enjoined to mate only for the purpose of begetting children. Thus, sexual relation between a man and his wife is viewed as not proper even when it is had during the right period, if it merely serves as a means for satisfying lust; so also, sexual union between the husband and his wife is not proper, even if it takes place with a view to reproduction, if it is not in the right period prescribed by the fastras .

Regarding the proper time of personal intimacy for the husband and wife, Manu says that the natural season ( rituh svdbhdivikah) of women consists of sixteen days in each month beginning from the first day of menstruation; of these, however, the first four days of menstrual period, the eleventh ( ekddali ) and the thirteenth (trayodaJi) are forbidden; and the rest are recommended for sexual intercourse . 283 Particular care has to be taken by the husband to avoid such intimacy with his wife when she is passing through the menstrual period; for, if he approaches her in such condition, he

is likely to impair his vitality ( dyuh ), his energy (teja), his strength ( bala ), his wisdom (prajnd) and also his sight ( chak - shu ). 234 By avoiding sexual intimacy with the menstruating wife, on the other hand, he will augment these powers . 235 And, the grihastha who abstains from sexual relations on all the days forbidden for cohabiting as above is considered as good as a brahma - chart 286 – of course in a qualified sense – in whatever dsrama he may be!

Manu perhaps finds the above rules a little too rigorous to be followed by all grihasthas and at all times; for, he also adds the proviso that the husband may approach his wife on any day except the parvas , 257 with the intention of gratifying the desire of his wife . 238 Further, it is also enjoined that the man who does not.

233. Man. iii, 46-7; cf. Yaj. i, 79.

234. Man. iii, iv, 41. 235. Man. iii, xv, 42.

236. Man. iii, 50 : '\*' brahmacharyeya bhavati yatra-tatdsrame

vasan

237. i.e. amavasya, the thirtieth day of the Hindu calendar month, the day of moonless night, regarded as an inauspicious day for certain occasions ; and a few such other days in each month.

238. “ tad-vrato rati-kamyaya” “ tadvrato ” is explained by Kulluka as 'bharya-prতির-vratam yasya sa tad-vrataK.

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have sexual relation with his wife in the proper season is a sinner . 239 Lastly, the husband is enjoined to seek sexual gratification through his wife only, and no other woman . 240

4

Coming now to the position of the son in the family , 241 we may note at the outset, that the acquisition of sons was considered to be the primary aim of marriage. The son rescues the souls of the deceased ancestors from the hell into which they might fall

without his birth. "Because the son protects his ancestors from the hell called Put , he has been called Putra " 242 "A man conquers the world by the birth of a son; he enjoys eternity by that^ of a grandson; and, the great grand-fathers enjoy eternal happiness by the birth of a grandson's son " 243 This is the religious view in support of the necessity of having a son.

The Mahabkdrata looks at the necessity of a son in the family from another angle also; the child is looked upon as a great bond of affection in the family, the centre to which the love of the parents converges: "What is a greater happiness to a father than what the father feels when his son, running to him, clasps him with his (tiny little) arms though his body is full of dust and dirt ," 244 And, "even the exhilarating or soft touch of the sandal paste, or that of a woman, or of water, is not so pleasing as that of one's own infant son, locked into his embrace ;" 245 truly "there is nothing in the world whose touch is more pleasing than that of a son ." 240 The Brahmanas utter the following Vedic mantras (on behalf of the father), adds the Mahabharata , at the birthday ceremony of the child: "You are bom of my body; you have sprung from my heart. You are myself in the form of my son. . . . My

239. Bau. iv, 1, 17 ; and also Devala, quoted by Madhavacharya on Paraiara-samhita , p. 100, (Bombay Sanskrit Series).

240. 'sva-dara-niratah sadd ' – Man. ii, 45 ; also Yaj. i, 81.

241. This section should be read particularly in conjunction with section 6, which describes the position of the parents vis-a-vis their children.

242. Man. ix, 138 ; Maha. Adi. 74, 27 ; cf. also Hama, ii, 107-12.

243. Maha. Adi. 74, 38. 244. ibid. 74, 52.

245. ibid 74, 55. 246. ibid; 74, 57.

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life depends on you. The continuation of my race depends on you. . . . Therefore live in happiness for one hundred years ." 247 "The man who, having begotten a son who is his own image, does not look after him, never gams the higher worlds. The Pitris (ancestors) have said that the son continues the race and supports

the relatives; therefore to give birth to a son is the best of all sacred acts .” 248 Manu expresses the view that it is necessary to acquire a son, if one desires to unite with the state of eternal bliss, viz. Mofcia . 249

The position of the eldest son, however, is peculiar in the Hindu family. He has the authority to offer the funeral cake ( pinda ) at the Sraddha ceremony i.e., the religious observances on the death anniversary of the father and the ancestors. On the birth of the first ( jyeshtha ) son, the father is freed from his debt to the manes . 250 Manu says that the eldest son on whom the father passes his debt ( rinam ) and through whom he obtains immortality (dnantyam) is alone begotten for the fulfilment of dharma ( sa eva dharmajah putrah ) ; all the rest are considered as the offspring of desire (kamajdh) , 251 The eldest son can make the family prosperous or bring it ruin; he is worthy of honour, and is not to be treated with disrespect by those who want to follow dharma . 252 As long as the eldest brother behaves as an eldest brother ought to behave (jyeshtha-vrittih) , he should be honoured and respected by his younger brothers like mother and like father; and, even if he behaves in a manner unworthy of an eldest brother (a- jyeshtha-vrittih) , he should yet be honoured like a brother ( bandhu-vat ) at least . 253

After the father's death, the sons may live under the eldest brother's control, paying him the same reverence and honour which they used to pay to their father . 254 If the brothers want to separate, under the Smriti rules, they have to give the best portion of the

247. *ibid.* 74, 61-63. 248. *ibid.* 74, 90-97.

249. *Man.* ii, 28. 250. *Man.* ix, 106

251. *Man.* ix, 107.

252. *ibid.* 109.

253. *ibid.* 110.

254. *Man.* ix, 105 ; also *Gaut.* xxviii, 1, 3 ; *Bau.* ii, 3, 13 ; *Ap.* ii 14, 6.

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ancestral property and a large share to the eldest brother. 255 If, however, he is unworthy, he would forfeit this special right of his. 256 In the Mahdbhdrata, Bhishma gives a discourse on the duties of the younger brothers towards the eldest, and his obligations in turn towards the younger ones. 257 The eldest brother should always treat the younger brothers in the way in\* which a preceptor treats his disciples. 258 The eldest brother should at times overlook the faults of his younger brothers; and, though possessed of wisdom, be should at times act as if he is not aware or mindful of their faults; if a younger brother be guilty of any sin, the eldest brother should correct him by indirect ways and means. 259 A great deal of the security of family happiness depends on the behaviour of the eldest brother towards the younger ones. "It is the eldest brother who augments the prosperity of the family or destroys it entirely. If the eldest brother does not happen to be gifted with sense, and is of wicked conduct, he encompasses the destruction of the whole family." 260 After the father's death, the younger brothers should "rely upon the eldest brother, as they did upon their father during his life time." 261 He is to maintain them and protect them. 262 The Mahabhdrata would deprive the eldest brother of his share in the family property, if he in any way does harm to his younger brother. 263 It further says that, if the brothers wish to partition the family property during the father's life time, the father should give equal shares to all of them. 264

Thus\* in the Hindu family, the eldest son is a particularly favoured person as compared to the other relatives. It is of course natural, generally speaking, that the first born child should attract greater pail of the attention and affection from the parents. 265 But, in the Hindu family, this natural partiality to the eldest child – provided he is male, of course – is further supported by the added

255. Man. ix, 112-13 ; Yaj. ii, 114 ; Gaut. xrviii, 4-7 ; Vis. xviii, 37.

258. Man. ix, 213. 257. Maha. Anu. Adhy. 105.

258. *ibid.* 105, 2. 259. *ibid.* 105, 4.

260. *ibid.* 105, 7. 261. *ibid.* 105, 18.

262. *ibid.* 105, 7.

263. *ibid.* 105, 7.

264. *ibid.* 105, 12.

265. Ci Young : Social Psychology (First Ed., 1937), p. 240 ;

Brown : Social Psychology , pp. 88-92,

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force of moral injunctions to that end. At the same time, sastras have also placed upon his shoulders certain responsibilities; and, according to some authorities, the eldest brother who fails in these duties and responsibilities towards his younger brothers would not only be deprived of his authority, but also of his share in the family property. This shows that they took a serious view of the eldest brother's failure in observing his responsibilities towards his younger brothers.

L. Guy Brown has lucidly pointed out the significance of the position of the first-born child, especially if the child is a son. 260 The experiences connected with each position, i.e., first, second, third child etc., are different, and in each case the individual will develop unique patterns of behaviour. Brown quotes Adler to say that experienced observers "can recognize whether an individual is first born, an only child, the youngest child or the like." 267 This will be particularly pronounced in those cultures, like the Hindu, where the eldest son is recognized as an important individual in the family from the beginning, to whose arrival in the world the whole family has been looking forward. Brown further points out: "Where there are other children, a great responsibility is often thrust upon the eldest child. If he accepts the burden, he usually develops into a stable conservative person. He will have a great reverence for family traditions and heir-looms. It devolves upon him not only to protect his younger brothers and sisters but also to cherish everything connected with the family name. Always and everywhere he must be the perfect example. If he does not rebel and consider himself the family martyr he will be a law-abiding citizen, conforming always to the demands of his family and community. He will develop a great sense of doing things because it is his duty. Security will be his dominant interest 268

However, such family and cultural traditions which place a high premium on being the first-born son are also likely to create another type of personality – the eldest son "who feels that he alone can do things right and becomes a chronic critic. . No matter

266. Brown, L. G. ■ Social Psychology , McGraw-Hill, N.Y. 1934 t page 88 ff.

267. Adler, A. : Understanding Human Nature , p. 149.

268. Brown, L. G. : op. cit.

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how well things are done by the other members of the family, there will always be fault-finding on the part of the eldest. In this case he may become the family martyr in his own estimation and may proceed to make himself into one by playing secondary roles, then feeling sorry for himself. There is some compensation for him in making cutting remarks, in criticism. These become a means by which he keeps up a high opinion of himself.” 260

It must be remembered, however, that it is not the chronological birth order or position in itself, but the psychological position which the child occupies in the family which is really significant and tells on the development of the child's personality. “His psychological position in the family,” observe Murphy and Murphy, “is of the utmost importance for the development of social behaviour, but psychological position’ is by no means completely dependent on birth order.” 270 After representing a digest of fifty birth order studies which indicate inconclusive or contradictory results 271 they conclude that “the objective fact of ordinal position in the family, without regard to its meaning to the child, to the siblings, and to the parents, is sure to yield meagre psychological results. The question whether the child feels accepted and loved; his emotional relation with his parents; competition or support which brothers and sisters bring to him; and the specific pressures or areas of freedom and stimulus that come along with one position in the family or another are probably more important, than the objective fact of ordinal position.” 272

In a culture like the Hindu, however, in which the importance attached to being the eldest son is hemmed in by dharma-injunctions of heavy responsibilities and duties attached to the position, towards the younger as well as towards the elder members of the family, and in which failure to abide by them is threatened with the penalty not only of the loss of that position but also of a share in the family property and of considerable degradation, the position and its attendant glorification is much less likely to lead to the second type of personality as Brown has pointed out above\* And,

269. Brown, L\* G\* : op. dt.

270. Murphy, G., Murphy, L. B. and Newcomb, T. M.: Expert-mental Social Psychology , 1937, pp. 362-3.

271. *ibid.* pp. 348-62.

272. *ibid.* p. 363,

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even though no case has been known where the eldest brother's failure to observe his duties and responsibilities towards the younger siblings has resulted in his being deprived of his family share, it is within the knowledge and experience of many a Hindu, even to this day, that he has, in quite a number of Hindu families, even sacrificed personal comforts and achievements in order to support and bring up his younger siblings, to give them better education and help them attain better positions in life, or, if the younger sibling is a sister to be married, to secure a good match for her.

5

Let us now try to see the position of the daughter in the family. It is enjoined that the father should look upon his daughters with the tenderest feeling. In the opinion of the Mahabharata, the goddess of prosperity herself always resides in the persons of one's daughters . 373 According to the Dharma-Sastras, the grihastha should never quarrel with his daughters . 274 One should regard one's daughter as the highest object of tenderness ( duhitā kripaitam jmrān ). 275

On the other hand, there are also statements which go to show that the birth of a daughter was looked upon with disfavour. Thus, the wife who was successively giving birth to daughters only was allowed to be superseded, after eleven years since marriage, by marrying another wife . 276

One who has no son is allowed to 'appoint' his daughter ( sūtdm kurvita putrikdm ), so that her son may perform his funeral rites and fraddha , 277 Manu tells us that the great Dakṣa Prajapati, the lord of all created beings, himself followed this rule and appointed all his daughters to give their sons into his family, in order to

273. Mahṣ. xiii, 11, 14 (Bombay Ed. by Ganpat Atm&ram) 'nityam nivasate hakṣmīh kanyakdsu pratishthitd \

274. Man. iv, 180; MahS. 6&nti. 243, 15-18; Yftj. i, 158.

275. Man. iv, 185 ( – kripanam – param krip&patram–K ulluka) ;  
Mahfi. S&nti 243, 20-1.

276. See Supra ; Man. ix, 81 ; Bau. ii, 4 , 6 ; ei N§r. xii, 04.

277. Man. .ix, 127 ; Vis. xv, 5 ; Vas. xvii, 15-17 ; Gau. xxviii, 18 ;  
Bau. ii, 8, 15.

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multiply his race ( vivridhyartham svavamJasya) , 278 The son of  
such an appointed daughter inherits the whole estate of the mater-  
nal grandfather . 279 If a son is subsequently bom to the maternal  
grandfather, both of them are to share equally in the estate . 280 The  
separate property of the mother, however, is shared by the un-  
married daughter; the son of the appointed daughter has no share  
in it . 281 A daughter who is not married till her father's death is to  
receive from each of her brothers, after the father's death, one-fourth  
of his share . 282

The daughter must be given in marriage by the father at the  
proper time . 283 If a proper suitor of good qualities and of the same  
varna is found even before the maiden has attained marriageable  
age, the father should not hesitate to give his daughter to him . 284  
The Mahanirvanatantra says that the daughter should be brought  
up and educated with care like the son till her marriage . 285 The  
maiden, on the other hand, is granted the privilege of remaining  
unmarried till her death in her father's house, rather than marrying  
a person destitute of good qualities (guna-hna) . 28C Ordinarily, she  
is not to take any initiative in regard to bringing about her own  
marriage. She may wait for three years, after she has attained  
the proper age, for being wedded. After that time she may take  
it upon herself to choose her mate from her own vama and worthy  
of her ( sadrisam ) without waiting for the help of her father . 287  
She incurs no guilt thereby . 288 Only, she is not entitled, then, to  
take away with her the ornaments which her parents, or her  
brothers might have given her 289 On the other hand, if the young  
maiden who has attained marriageable age has no father or other

278. Man. ix, 128.

279. Man. ix, 128. 280. Man. ix, 134.

281. Man. ix, 133 ; Yaj. ii, ' 128.

282. Man. ix, 118 ; Yaj. ii, 124 ; Vis. xviii, 35 ; Brihas. xxv, 64.

283. Man. ix, 4 ; Yaj. i, 64 ; Vas. xvii, 69-70 ; Bau. iv, 1, 12, 17-19 ;  
eta

284. Man. ix, 88 ; Vas. xvii, 70 ; Gau. xviii, 21 ; Bau. iv, 1, 11.

285. Mahanirvanatantra, viii, 47.

286. Man. ix, 89.

287. Man. ix, 90 ; Yaj. i, 64 ; Vis. xxiv, 40 ; Gau. xviii, 20 ; Vas.  
xvii, 67-68 ; also MaM. Aau. 44, 16.

288. Man. ix, 91.

289. Man. ix, 92 ; Gau. xviii, 20,

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guardian to arrange for her marriage, she may approach the King, and with his permission, may herself choose her groom (varayet svayam) and marry him . 290 Vatsyayana also opines that a maiden, who, though possessed of good qualities and bom in a humble family or even when well-bom, is destitute of wealth, or has lost her parents, and is come of age, should move herself to arrange her own marriage . 291

Once a daughter is betrothed to a man, she shall be given to him only . 292 "Neither ancients nor modems who were good men have done such a deed , – that after promising a daughter to one man, they gave her to another ." 293 Narada however lays down some exceptions to this rule: Thus, should a more respectable suitor appearing eligible in pomt of capabilities to acquire dharma, artha and kdma is found, then the former engagement may be broken even though sulka i.e. financial consideration has been already accepted for the maiden . 294 So also, when a groom goes abroad after having espoused ( pratigrihya ) a maiden, she should wait for him till she passes through three monthly sicknesses, and then choose another husband . 295 On the other hand, if a man, after having plighted his faith to a maiden deserts her, although she is blameless, he shall be fined and shall be compelled to marry the maiden even against his will . 296

The sale of a daughter in marriage has been forbidden to a Hindu father. Even a sudra ought not to take nuptial fee, when he gives away his daughter; for, he who takes a fee sells his daughter 297 Again, “No father who knows (what is right and wrong) must take even the smallest gratuity in return for his

290. Nar. xii, 22 : yada tu kaschin naiva syat kanya rajanam dsrayet / anujnayd varam tasya parzkshya varayet svayam/ /

291. Kam. iii, 4, 36.

292. Man. ix, 47 ; Nar. xii, 28.

293. Man. ix, 99.

294. Nar. xii, 30 : kanyayam prapta-sulkayam sreyaśched vara avrajat / dharmdrthakdma-samyuktam vdkyam tatranritam bhavet/ /

295. Nar. xii, 24 : pratigrihya cha yah kanyam naraśchidantaram vrajet / trln ritun samatikramya kanyadnydm varayed varam / /

(The tr. is Dr. Jolly's).

296. Nar. xii, 41 : pratigrhya cha yah kanyam a dushtam utsmjet narah / vineyah so'pyakfimo'pi kanyam tame v a c hed vahet / /

297. Man. ix, 98 ; cf. Ap. ii, 13, 11-12.

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daughter; for, a man, who, through avarice takes a gratuity (virtually) sells his offspring .” 298

6

Finally, we shall consider the position of the parents in the family. The term pitarau (dual of pitri) is used to denote father (pita) and mother (mdta) collectively. Literally, however, pita (the nominative singular of pitri) means “father”; just as mats (the nominative singular of mdtri) means mother. The term pitri is derived from f pa to ‘protect’ or to ‘preserve’, and pitri therefore etymologically means ‘protector’. The derivative meaning of the word thus emphasizes the most important obligation of the father

with reference to the offspring, viz., to look after the helpless young one and give it care and protection. The Rig-Veda refers to the father as the symbol of all goodness and kindness. 29 \* He is described as fondly carrying the child in his arms, and playing with it on his lap . 300

On the other hand, the father's word is to be always obeyed by the son . 301 The Aitareya Brahman 302 narrates the story of a boy named Sunahsepa being sold by his father; so also there is a story in the Rig Veda of Rijrasva who was blinde^by his father. 80 \* But such acts have been condemned no sooner than narrated in the same passages. As MacDonell and Keith have pointed out in this connection, "to lay stress on . . . isolated and semimythical incidents would be unwise ." 304 So, it becomes a really difficult task to judge the extent to which the father exercised dominion over his son in the Vedic period.

There are, though, other instances of the son carrying out the word of the father without even questioning its morality or propriety. Rama gives his mother some instances of this kind, in support of his own desire to abdicate the throne and go in exile in order

298. Man. iii, 51 ; cf. Bau. i, 21, 2-3 ; Vas. i, 37-38 ; Ap. ii, 13, 11

299. Rig. iv, 17, 17 ; viii, 86, 4, etc.

300. Rig. i, 38, 1 ; v. 43, 7.

301. Rig. i, 68, 5.

302. Ait, Br. vii, 12ff.

303. Rig. i, 116, 16; also 117, 17; (From Vedic Index, i, 528).

304. Vedic Index , i, p. 528.

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to fulfil his father's word of honour given to his step-mother in an unguarded moment . 305 Rishi Kandu, at his father's order, killed a cow even though he knew it was a sinful act on his part to do so; King Sagara at his father's command, started digging the earth till he himself perished in the act. Parasurama, again committed the most heinous crime of murdering his own mother at his father's



command. Rama stoutly argues and asserts, therefore before his mother that his duty was to obey his father, even if that meant disobedience of the mother's command. Thus of the two parents, the father's word is the more to be honoured than the mother's by the son. And the Sukrd-Niti has said that it was through the strength of their father's penances really that Parasurama got back his mother alive, and Rama got back his kingdom ; 300 and, due to the disobedience of their father's commands, the sons of Yayati, and of Viswamitra, came to be degraded to the lowest positions in life . 307 "One should always keep up the habit of serving one's father in word, thought and action; one should ever do that by which the father is satisfied; one should not do that by which the father is pained even on a single occasion ." 308 Generally speaking, however, both the parents have to be respected by the offsprings with equal reverence . 300

The Mahdbhdrata inculcates the same spirit of obedience to both the parents on the part of the offspring. The story of Bhishma remaining a bachelor to the end of his life for the sake of his father's wish is well-known. He was the only son of his father King Santanu at the time the latter fell in love with a beautiful fisher girl and wanted to marry her. To satisfy the girl's father so that he may give his daughter to Santanu without hesitation, BhTshma renounced his own claims on the throne in succession to his father, and further, took a vow not to marry so that he may have no sons to claim the throne against the sons of his father that may be born to the fisher girl. To carry out the father's word is the supreme duty of the son . 310 The father, the mother and the guru – these three are always to be obeyed, and never to be insulted; there is no

305. Rama, ii, 21, 30 ff.

307. ibid. 83-85.

308. ibid. 86-87.

309. Rama, ii, 30, 35, ff.

310. Santi. 272, 15. .

306. J&ukr. N. xi, 78-79.

sinner in the world equal to the son who insults any of these three . 31 1  
 The five Plndava Princes married one wife just in order to carry  
 out the command of their mother, though it was given under com-  
 plete ignorance of the situation . 312 Whatever any of the five brothers  
 earned or secured was submitted to their mother KuntI, who would  
 then, as a rule, ask all the five to share it. Arjuna, the third brother,  
 won Princess DraupadI as his bride in an open competition for her  
 hand, and the five brothers arrived home with her and announced  
 joyfully from outside to their mother who was inside that they had  
 brought DraupadI; whereupon KuntI, without even looking at what  
 was brought, said, as usual, that they should all share it!

Many other instances could be given from the two Epics to show  
 the very high degree of filial reverence expected of the sons and  
 daughters. The story, for instance, is told of a boy Chira-karin,  
 son of sage Gautama, who was ordered by his father to kill his  
 mother Ahilya with whom Indra had committed adultery. Chira-  
 karin – he was so called because he would always reflect for a long  
 while ( chiram ) before acting – however, pondered a great deal over  
 the propriety of the order given by his father: He could not commit  
 the sinful act of killing his mother at all; for though obedience  
 to the father was a very high dharma for him (pitur^dna paro  
 dharmah ), by his own dharma he was also bound to protect his  
 mother (sva-dharmo matri^raksanam) t 313 Who could be happy  
 after killing his own mother? On the other hand, who could ever  
 acquire any prestige (pratishthd) by disobeying his father ? 314 The  
 father is the son's foremost of gurus ( gurur agryah) and his highest  
 dharma ( paro dharmah ); 315 the father being pleased, all gods are  
 pleased . 310 On the other hand, the mother too, is equally venerable;  
 she is the principle cause ( hetuh ) of the union of the five elements  
 ( pancha-bhautikah ) which make for the son's birth as a human  
 being 317 She is the soothing balm against all sorts of calamities that  
 may befall the son ; 318 with the mother the man feels protected;

311. Santi. 108, 29-31. 312. Adi. 211.

313. Maha. 6anti. 266, 11.

314. ibid. 266, 12.

315. ibid. 266, 17.

316. ibid. 266, 21,

317. ibid. 266, 25.

318. ibid. 266, 26 : – f sarvasydr̥tasya nirvritih r .

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without her, he feels deserted . 819 “The man who, though shorn of all prosperity, ( sriyd hino’pi), enters his home calling out – ‘O mother!’ – does not suffer from grief; nor does decrepitude (athaviram) ever attack him .” 320 A person whose mother is alive, even if he has sons and grandsons and is a hundred years old is for her but a child of two 321 Able or disabled, lean or robust, the son is always protected by the mother. . . . When his mother leaves him, then does the son become old, then does he become stricken with grief, then does he feel that this world has no interest for him (sunyam jagat). There is no shelter like the mother; there is no refuge like her; there is no defence better than her; there could be no one dearer than her (to the son ). 322 The mother is called dhatr : of her son, because she has borne him in her womb ( kukshi-sam - dharanat ) ; she is called jananj, because she is the principal cause of the son’s birth ( janandt ); she is known by the name amba also, for she rears his limbs (angndm vardhandt ) ; she is vJrasu because she gives birth to valiant (vlra) children; and she is susrii for she nurses and looks after ( svJrushanat ) the son . 323 In the^ person of the father is a combination of all gods; but in the person of the mother, however, is a combination of all gods and also all humanity. 324 – All these and such other thoughts had filled Chira-karin’s mind, and he passed a long time, in fact many days in this manner in an indecisive state of mind, till the father returned back, now repentant of his cruel order given to his son, and burning with grief; he was, however, delighted to find out that his son had not carried out the order as yet!

Under the injunctions of the Dharma^Sastras, the father is the object of the deepest reverence for the sons He is the first of those in the family to whom respect has to be paid by the children of the family . 325 Manu says that the father, indeed, is the Guru of his son . 326 Some Smriti writers have given the father a considerably

319. *ibid.* 266, 26 : – \*■ mdtrilabhe sanathatvam anathatvam vipar-

yaye\

320. *ibid.* 266, 27.

321. *ibid.* 266, 28.

322. *ibid.* 266, 29-31.

323. *ibid.* 266, 32-33.

324. *ibid.* 266, 43.

325. *Man.* ii, 145 ; *Gaut.* vi, 1-3.

326. *ibid* : c1 *Yaj.* i, 34.

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high position of authority in the family; he rules over his family as a king over his subjects . 327 Vasishtha has said that the father has the power to drive his son out of the house, and even to sell him . 328 But Manu and Yajnavalkya forbid that the father should ever cast off his son, unless he has committed a very serious crime . 323

The child may be punished by beating only = when the parent wants to correct him, not otherwise; and even then, such beating could be done on his back, and never on a noble part of the body . 330 And, the Mahabharata advises that the son should be only “mildly reprimanded by parents for purposes of instruction. , ,331 Punishment has been one of the chief means with most parents for controlling and canalizing the behaviour of their children. However, too often, it is indulged in by parents to prove their authority and to satisfy their prestige notions rather than for the genuine welfare of the child. Indiscriminate and harsh punishment to children leads to warped and distorted personalities in later adulthood. “Punishment” says Brown, “ .... is a definite experience that will become part of the organization of past experiences on which all attitudes are based .” 332

In the *Smritis*, at some places, the mother is referred to as more venerable than even the father. She is said to be thousand times more venerable than the father . 333 In general, the *Smritis*, too, emphasize that the mother, the father and the preceptor, as well as the eldest brother must be respected and obeyed by every one. 33 \* And, one should never offend one’s father, mother and Guru.

The reader will be interested in the following account of a modern Hindu family in action, given by a young Hindu student, from the files of case-studies collected by Professors Burgess and Locke: –

“My family is not a very big one. There are three brothers who are married, the widowed mother, and two daughters who are

327. Nar. i, 32-42. 328. Vas. xv, 2.

329. Man. viii, 389 ; Yaj. ii, 237 ; similarly in Yaj. i, 35 ; Gau. vi»  
51 ; Vas. xiii, 48, etc.

330. Man. iv, 164 and viii, 299-300 ; cf. Vis. lxxi, 80-81.

331. Maha. Anu 104, 37.

332. Brown, L. G. : Social Psychology , p. 69,

333. Man. ii, 145 : u sahasram tu pitrin mdta gauraven&tirichyate w .

334. Man. ii, 225-37 ; Vis. xxx, 1-10.

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also married but have not gone to live with their husbands. The widowed mother is about 50 years old, and the eldest son is about 35 years of age. The youngest son is still in his teens although he has a wife and a child. Both the daughters are little girls of not more than 10.

4 4 All the members of the big family co-operate and work for each other. All cook and eat in the same place. The earnings, savings, and toil are shared by all the family members. One of the brothers looks after their property and supervises the agricultural work. The youngest of them stays at home and attends to business. He works at his big shop with his assistants, selhng and buying. He has also the responsibility of seeing that other family members, especially the women, are not in any trouble.

“The women in this family have really no well-defined work. All of them work together. They have their servants who do the hardest work. Usually, the youngest wife is the one who works for the others. The widowed mother does nothing but she manages everything. She has absolute rule over the family members. She sees that the daughters-in-law behave, that the house-father (the eldest son) receives the respect due to him from other family members, that servants of the house-hold are well-behaved and orderly, that the community thinks well of the house, that the family priest is respected and honoured, that enough money is contributed for feeding the Brahmans, that gods are venerated properly, and that there is some substantial saving in the house every month.

"I was at the wedding of one of my sisters who was 8 years old at that time. The marriage was arranged by the widowed mother. The bridegroom was not more than 12. The bride viewed her husband as a playmate and was told by her mother and the Brahman priest to place her affection on him, and never think of any other boy." 335

This family, on the whole, shows not only the influence of the traditional Hindu ideology but also the influence of the later system of early marriage of boys and girls.

These are some of the salient aspects of the Hindu family life. The kula or the family was no doubt regarded by the Hindu as the

335. W. E. Burgess and H. J. Locke : The Family , pp. 18-19. N.Y., American Book Co., 1950.

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place of nursery where the individual learns his lessons in social life. Here, in the fcula, were given him lessons in affection, lessons in giving respect to elders, lessons in subserving individual inclinations and even aspirations, for the purpose of the attainment of collective ends. The sex instinct has to be directed to the end of the continuity of the family. The home (griha) is primarily the place where the three objects of life, dharma, artha and kdma – spiritual merit, wealth-earning, and the gratification of the senses – have to be practised in terms of a harmonious synthesis together, towards the end of attaining the final beatitude ( moksa ); and, as has been observed by Manu, the real good of man consists in a proper aggregate of these three purushdrthasP Q

And in this grihasthasrama , again, is yajna preached for the grihastha . The definition of yajna as preached in this dirama is perhaps the most important. Living in the midst of circumstances and situations which are likely to develop the ego and multiply its involvements and of 'mine'-ness and 'thine'-ness, living as a grihastha , as a kutumbin, as a man of the world ( nagarika ), the individual is yet asked to live and believe that this is not the final end for which he is bom. 337 The individual is expected to believe that his life as a man of the world is only a part of his duties (niyata-karma) whereby he is to fulfil his obligations to his wife, to his children, to his family, to his departed ancestors and to his community. And, in the midst of all these circumstances, the indi-

vidual is expected to live out of, and, as if, apart from these, as if he were performing the yajna. In the midst of world and worldliness, the grihastha is no doubt a part of it; yet he is called upon to behave with a spirit of detachment in all his sense-doings, in the true spirit of a yajna . The symbolic fire in the home and its continuity and its worship, the various ceremonials that centre around it, – all these show that the home is only a trust vested in the grihastha , a yajnakunda as it were, in which the grihastha and those under his care have to pour their lives for the perpetuity of that fire and what it represents and embodies. Not only the grihastha's and the grihint's duties and doing have this note of direction; but this note also governs the attitude which the other members of the house are to have towards these two and towards each other.

336. Man. ii, 224.

337. Of. Thoothi : "The Vaishiiavas of Gujardf % p, 54.

## CHAPTER VH

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE WOMAN And Her Place in the Society

9 I 'HE attitude of a community towards the woman has  
\* a great social significance in any society. The attitude of the Hindu towards the woman as reflected in the Sastrakaras ' and other authorities' writings has already been considered by us in several respects in the course of our discussions on education, marriage and family; but that had necessarily to be restricted to the specific contexts only. Here we shall consider the attitude of the Hindu towards womankind as a whole and in general, so as to give a complete picture of the woman's place in Hindu society.

In the Rig-Veda, the husband and the wife are described as taking equal part in the sacrificial rites. The ' dampat i – the householder and his wife – with 'one accord' press the Soma (a plant, most important in sacrificial offerings), rinse and mix it with milk, and offer adoration to the God. 1 2 3 The Vedic literature mentions many a woman's name who attained eminence as philosophers along with men. ViSvavara, of the family ( gotra ) of Atri, is described as a philosopher ( brahma-vadini ) and well versed in the sacred texts ( 7 nantra-drashtri) , and is the author of a hymn in the Rig-Veda\* Ghosha, the daughter of sage Kakshlvan, was the author of two hymns of Rig-Veda ; 8 and Lopamudra, wife of Agasti, composed two verses. 4 Queen Sasvati, wife of King Asanga, is also a philosopher of the Vedic times; 5 so was Apala, another philosopher (Brahma-

1. Rig. viii, 31, 5 ; cf. also x, viii, 27, 7
2. Rig. v, 28.
3. Rig. x, 39-40.
4. Rig. i, 179, 1-2.
5. Rig. viii, 1, 34.

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vddiru) well versed in the sacred texts ( mantra-drashiri ) . 6 7 IndranI, the wife of Indra, too was a mantra-dr ash tri. 7 So again, two ladies, Sikata and NivavarI, composed ten verses of a hymn . 8 The Rig-Veda also relates to us the story of Brihaspati and his wife Juhu, which is pertinent in this connection: He left his wife and went away for practising penances; but the Gods explained to him how it was improper to perform penances alone without wife . 9 These are some of the instances from the Vedas which speak for the status of woman during the Vedic period . 10

Thus, during the Vedic period, we have reasons to believe that so far as education was concerned, the position of women was generally not unequal to that of the men. Woman had similar education as man; she took part in philosophic debates like man and with men; she practised penances like man; This shows that man and woman were regarded as having equally important status in the social life of the early period.

Similarly, the Satapatha Brahmana informs us that woman was regarded as an equal sharer with man of the responsibilities and duties in the home. The following passages from the Satapatha Brahmana will illustrate this: "When the husband is about to ascend (the sacrificial altar) , he addresses his wife in these words: 'Come, wife, let us ascend to heavens'; and the wife answers, 'Yes, let us ascend'. The reason why he addresses his wife thus is that she is one half of his own self; therefore as long as he has no wife, so long he does not propagate his species, so long he is no complete individual; but when he has a wife, he propagates his species, and then he is complete. 'Complete I want to go to that supreme goal,' – thus he thinks; therefore, he addresses his wife in this manner ." 11



One who has not married is not competent to offer the ritual prayers and sacrifice . 12 In fact, the duty of singing the mantras at the sacrificial ceremony was to be performed by the wife . 13 These passages bring out to us that the woman was regarded as having an

6. Rig. viii, 80 ; 4)1. 8. Rig. ix, 86, 11-20\*

7. Rig. x, 86 and 145. 9. Rig. x, 109.

10. See also ch. IV, pp. 139-144 above.

11. Sat. Br. v, 2, 1, 10.

12. Sat. Br. v, 1, 6, 10 : a-yajrayo vaisha yo a-patnzkah.

13. Sat. Br. xiv, 3, 1, 35 : patnx-karma eva ete atra kwrvanti yad

tdgdtarah .

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equally important share in the drama of human life as man. Man without woman was considered as an "inadequate person. ,,

But in the same Brdhmana there is another passage which shows that woman is regarded as intellectually inferior to man, or rather, that she is regarded as more emotional and less rational by nature than man; therefore, she is apt to fall an easy prey to external appearances; she lacks the ability for true appreciation or balance of mind and does not possess depth of reason. This passage relates to the story of the theft of soma (nectar or elixir) from heaven. While Gayatrl was carrying soma away from heaven, a Gandharva (a celestial demi-god belonging to the class of musicians) stole it away from her. The Gods devised a trick to get soma back from the Gandharvas. They knew that the Gandharvas were fond of women. So they sent Vak (the Goddess of Speech) to them; and she managed to bring soma back to the Gods. But the Gandharvas too followed her, and said to the Gods, 'soma shall be yours and Vak ours'. 'So be it!' said the Gods; 'but if she would rather come hither, do not carry her away by force; let us woo her/ The Gods accordingly wooed her. "The Gandharvas recited the Vedas to her, saying 'see how we know it, see how we know it!\* " The Gods, however, once again decided to take advantage of their knowledge of woman's nature; they created the lute, and sang and played upon it and amused Vak, whereupon she returned to them.

<f But in truth, she returned to them vainly; for, she turned away from those engaged in praising and praying (i.e. the Gandharvas), to dance and song (i.e. to Gods). Wherefore, even to this day, women are given to vain things; for, it was on this wise that Vak turned thereto, and other women do as she did. And hence, it is to him who dances and sings that they most readily take a fancy.” 14

This passage purports to explain that a woman has the weakness of being emotional or sentimental and can be easily deceived by external appearance. It also suggests that the fair sex is more sensitive to expressions of fine arts. As we proceed we shall find somewhat similar views about woman's nature in the Mahdbhdrata and other works.

With such views, we may compare a very recent analysis by

14. Sat. Br. iii, 2, 4, 2-6.

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Dr. A. A. Roback, formerly of Harvard University, who argues that there is an inborn basis for the disposition of consistency, and that, on the whole, women naturally lack it: –

“ Women, too, are, as many great novelists and essayists have remarked,

incapable of acting with consistency, and, unless moved by pity, are prone to commit many unfair acts on various pretexts, chief -among which is that, being the weaker sex, or the weaker of two of their own sex, or having ‘gone through’ more than their rival or expecting to enjoy life less than some one else, they ought not to lose at least this opportunity of making up for the hardship eithei already endured or in store for them.

“Consistency Lacking in Women: – Such a warm champion of woman's cause as Moll tries to gloss over this character defect by an explanation which leaves much to be desired. ‘When women’, he writes, ‘are so frequently denied the sense of justice, it is.... a matter of the present motive preventing other considerations from presenting themselves.’ (A. Moll: “Sexuahtdt und Charak - ter 3 : Sexual-Probleme, Zt. f. Sexualzo’ft. u. SexuoXpolitik , 1914, Vol. X). What is this but an admission of the fact that they are not considerate of others, in other words, that they lack the impulse to apply to others the same measure as they apply to themselves?

“We hear it said and repeated almost ad nauseam that Women are prompt-

ed by their feelings rather than by their reason. But such a hollow statement possesses no scientific value. Many women reason well enough at the very time they are supposed to be guided by their feelings. Their reasoning, however, lacks consideration for others. It is the element of consistency alone which is wanting— a gap which is sometimes filled by the substitute of pity. If the above time-honoured and apparently universal belief about the main-spring of woman's conduct is to be invested with any psychological meaning, we should necessarily hold to one or the other of these alternatives; either that women, on the whole, are born with stronger instinctive tendencies, or else the consistency urge is weaker in them than in man. The former alternative does not seem plausible, more especially as the maxim of parsimony would lead us to explain the phenomenon through some weakness in the one factor rather than in the many.

“It is, therefore, not in the relative strength of the instinct that we shall find the reason the lack of objectivity in female conduct, but in the relative weakness of the fundamental principle of conduct which has its root psychologically in some mechanism making for consistency.” 1 ^

With the above quotation from Roback, we may compare Freud's view: “It may be admitted that women have but little sense of justice, and this is no doubt connected with the preponder\*

15. A. A. Roback : The Psychology of Character , 3rd Ed., 609-611, London, Kegan Paul, 1952.

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ence of envy of their mental life.” 16

However, recent cross-cultural studies by anthropologists like Margaret Mead 17 seem to indicate clearly that personality and character differences are in general basically influenced by the cultural norms of the society in which an individual is born and bred. Even the character and temperament traits associated with ‘maleness’ and ‘femaleness’ are profoundly influenced and are the resultant of the peculiarities of the culture to which its men and women belong. Excepting for the natural anatomical and bio-physiological differences among the sexes, there could be hardly any psychological traits or characteristics, in general, which are not influenced by the peculiar traditions, beliefs and attitudes current in the culture. These traditions, beliefs and attitudes influence the behaviour of men and women born in the culture from early childhood, and mould and shape their behaviour to bring it in conformity with the stand-

ards set up in the culture as a result of these beliefs and attitudes. Individuals who deviate from such standards or norms are looked upon as 'queer', eccentric, unusual or abnormal. But all such judgments are relative to the particular cultural norms accepted and established in the given society.

It thus becomes a circle, 'vicious' or otherwise, of human behaviour: Men and women behave in certain typical ways respectively in a society because their society expects them to behave in these ways; and the society expects them to behave in these ways because all the members of the two sexes in that society are actually found to follow those respective modes of behaviour. Even such traits which are broadly classified as "masculinity" and "femininity", according to our experience in our cultures, and all the many characteristics respectively associated with each of them, may show a complete reversal of expression in different cultures with opposite norms for the sexes than ours, men showing all the feminine characteristics and women all the masculine characteristics. –

16. Freud : New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis , (1934), pp. 134 ff.

17. Margaret Mead : Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies, in From the South Seas , William Morrow, 1939. Also the same author's Male and Female , William Morrow, New York, 1949.

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excepting of course, the natural anatomical and bio-physiological differences, – as for example among the Tchambulis of New Guinea. 18

Such divergences on a whole cultural or group scale in certain societies are adjudged as exceptional by Helene Deutsch, an eminent Freudian. 19 These exceptions, in her view, cannot affect the general principle relating to the universal personality and temperamental differences which distinguish men from women. She further maintains that "this principle will continue to assert itself until we succeed in influencing the internal, hormonal constitution of the human body", and also until the anatomy of the sexes and the reproductive functions are altered. 20

It must be said here that Deutch and other Freudians in general have not had any first hand knowledge of the ways of men and

women in societies other than their own, viz., the European or the American white groups. Cross-cultural studies and evidence furnished by Mead, Benedict and others is more scientific for general conclusions on the issues concerned.

In the epics of the Ramayana and the Mahdbhdrata, the question of the position of woman could be studied from so many points of view. And the views expressed are not always free from contradiction of each other, as we shall see presently.

In the Ramayana , Kausalya, the mother of Rama performs the svasti-yaga, the sacrifice to ensure good luck to him, on the morning of the proposed installation of her son as the Crown Prince. 21 Sita is described as offering sandhya prayers, i.e. ritual prayers which are offered with 'mantras in the morning, noon and evening. 22 Rama had to go in exile for twelve years to fulfil his father's word given to his step-mother; and, on his return home after years of exile, he was given the first abhisheka , a symbolic coronation "bath", first at the hands of several unmarried girls, and then by the Ministers and Generals. 23

18. *ibid.*

19. Helene Deutsch : The Psychology of Women , 2 vols. Vol. I, pp. 224-225. Norton, New York, 1944.

20. *ibid.*

21. Rama, ii, 20, 15: sd kshauma-vasand devl nityam vratapardya/ agnim juhotti sma tada mantravut-krita-mangald.

22. Ram\$. v, 15, 48. 23. Rama. vi, 138, 38 ; 61.

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The Rdmayana is a glorious illustration for the Hindu of the ideal womanhood. Sita is prepared to cast off all the luxuries of the palace and accompany her husband to the forest. On the eve of Rama's departure to the forest to fulfil the word of his father, King Dasaratha, Rama declared to Sita that he had no intention to take her with him and make her suffer so many hardships; against this she argued thus:

"My lord, the mother, father and son,

Receive their lots by merit won;

The brother and the daughter find  
The portions to their deeds assigned.

The wife alone what'er await,

Must share on earth her husband's fate;

So now the King's command which sends  
Thee to the wild, to me extends.

The wife can find no refuge, none,

In father, mother, self or son:

Both here, and when they vanish hence,

Her husband is her sole defence." 24

Sita is regarded as one of the five ideal and revered women of India, the other four being Ahalya, Draupadi, Tara and Mandodari; even a mental recital of the names of these five is said to purge one of one's great sins (mahadpataka) , 25 It is highly significant to note, in this connection, that each one of these ladies happened to have some blemish or other in her career or behaviour for which, however, she was in no way responsible. And therefore, each one of them was, from the moral standard of purity of motives, regarded as a woman of ideal character. Thus, Ahalya, the wife of sage Gautama, was seduced by God Indra who disguised himself as her husband and deceived her; Draupadi was married to five husbands, the sons of Kunti, who unknowingly asked them, as usual, to share like good brothers what really one of them had won in an open contest, – for her hand was won by Arjuna, the third brother, from amongst a number of suitors by fulfilling a difficult test of

24. RamS. (Tr. By Griffith) ii, 27.

25. Ahalya Draupadi Sita Tara Mandodari tathd/pancha-kanyam smarm nityam maha-patakana&anam .

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archery; Sita was abducted by her husband's enemy Ravana with a view to violating her chastity, and though she successfully resisted his attempts and remained faithful to her husband, Dame Scandal was busy spreading malicious gossip about her; Tara was abducted by The Moon who refused to deliver her up to her husband Brihaspati, the Guru of the Gods, until God Brahma compelled the Moon to restore her to Brihaspati; and, Mandodari was the wife of King Ravana, supposed to be the villain of the Ramayana and was the enemy of Ramachandra. Evidently, these women have been judged, not by their physical failures or blemishes in behaviour for which they were in no way responsible, but by their otherwise exemplary conduct as wives and by the purity of their motives and of their ideals. And even to this day, there is an attitude of deep reverence towards these 'ideal' ladies in the mind of the Hindu.

In the Mahabharata, there are some notable instances which illustrate how women used to take upon themselves the task of counselling and guiding men on religious and social questions. Thus, a lady named Sulabha discusses the problem of attaining moksha. It is a fairly long discourse: Sulabha who was "gifted with yogic power",<sup>27</sup> had really come to test the knowledge of King Janaka. Both of them exchanged whatever he and she had to say on the problem. After "hearing the words of Sulabha fraught with excellent sense and reason," King Janaka could not reply thereto.<sup>28</sup> Again, the Brahmana preceptor (guru) of King Senajit cites to him the authority of the verses sung by a courtesan (vela), called Pingala (pingalayd gitd gdtha) on the problem of life, death, and knowledge.<sup>29</sup> In the Vanaparva, again, Draupadi gives a long lecture to Yudhishthira and Bhishma upon certain problems of conduct and mortality.<sup>30</sup> She is also called a pandita > a learned lady.<sup>31</sup>

In a later Parva, Draupadi is once more found giving a long

26. Maha. Santi. 321, verses 20-192.

27. *ibid.* 321, 16.

28. *ibid.* 321, 193.

29. Maha. santi 174 (In the Mahabharata, this story is narrated by Bhishma to Yudhishthira.)

30. Maha, Van. 27 ft.

31. *ibid.*

discourse 32 to her husband. on his duties as a Kshatriya, i.e., a member of the warrior class. Yudhishtira, disgusted with war and its evil effects, is in favour of renunciation of all worldly affairs. But Draupadi reprimands him for this foolish idea of his. "If," says she, "these brothers of yours were wise, they would have locked you up with all the unbelievers (in a prison) and taken charge of the government of the earth. The man, who, on account of feeble intellect, acts thus never succeeds in achieving prosperity."

Let us try to find out some more light on the question from the views on woman expressed in the Mahabharata itself. In the Anuśāsanaparva we are told that Yudhishtira requested the wise Grandfather Bhīṣma to enlighten him regarding the nature of women (strīṇāṃ svabhāvaṃ) . 33 "It is said that woman is the root of all evil, and that she is narrow-minded," says Yudhishtira . 34 Bhīṣma replies to him that, in a sense, the female is naturally a temptress and a lurer ; 35 moreover, she is not endowed with strength of will enough to resist temptation; therefore, she always stands in need of protection by man . 36 There are two types of women the virtuous (sādhvī) and non-virtuous (asādhvī). The virtuous ones are the mothers of the earth, they sustain the whole earth. The non-virtuous type are given to sinful behaviour and can be recognized by the signs or marks (lakṣaṇa) expressive of the evil that is in them which appears on their persons . 37 The face or perhaps the body, in Bhīṣma's opinion here, seems to be the index of a woman's character . 38

32. Maha. 6anti. 14. (The whole chapter).

33. Maha. Anu. 38, 1.

34. ibid. : stnyo hi mulam doshānām laghu-chittā hi tādṛśa smṛitā /.

35. Maha. Anu. 38-39.

36. Maha. Anu. 43, 19.

37. ibid. 43, 19-21 :

"stnyah sādhvyo mahābhagdh sammata loka-mataraḥ/  
dhrayanti mahimā rajānīm sa-vānā-kṛtānām/  
asādhvyas chāpi dūr-vṛttā .."

vijñeya lakṣaṇair duṣpāiḥ sva-gaṭra-sahajair nṛpāḥ"

38. For a modern discussion of the problem, see A. M. Ludovici :



u The Choice of a Mate”, Part II, pp. 239 seq , where he discusses the question of physiognomy, human points and morphology, as avenues of approach from the visible to the invisible in order to know the man or the woman.

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It is because of this natural weakness of her character that she is not to be held as much responsible as the man for her sins. Woman should not be condemned altogether as a sinner because she naturally lacks the strength of mind to resist temptations.

44 ... . Woman commits really no offence’’, says Chira-karin, referring to Indra’s adultery with his own mother by duping her. “It is man only who commits offences. By committing an act of adultery, only the man becomes sullied with sin. . . . Women can commit no sin. It is man who becomes sullied with sin. Indeed, on account of the natural weakness of the sex as shown in every act, and their liability to solicitation, women cannot be considered as offenders .” 39 The Sage Ashtavakra, who had gone out in search of knowledge of the nature of the woman, is informed in a similar manner of “the lightness of the female character” by the celestial Lady to whom he approached to obtain the knowledge . 40

In another Adhyaya in the same Parva we find Bhishma speaking in terms of high reverence about woman. “Women should always be adored (piijyd) and treated with love ( lalayitavyd ).” n Where women are treated with honour, the very Gods are said to be propitiated; and where women are not adored, all acts become fruitless (aphatih) . 42 If the women of a family, on account of the treatment they receive, indulge in grief and tears, that family soon becomes extinct . 43 Those homes which are cursed by women meet with destruction and ruin as if scorched by some Atharvan rite; such homes lose their splendour; their growth and prosperity cease . 44 Bhishma further tells Yudhishthira that Manu, on the eve of his departure from this world, made over women to the care and protection of men; for he knew that women are weak, that they would fall an easy prey to the seduction of men, that they possess a sensi-

39. Mah§. 6anti. 266, 38 & 40 :

evam stri naparddhnōti nara evaparddhyati f  
vyuchcharanas cha maha-dosham nara evaparddhyati//  
ndparddho\*sti ndrindm nara evaparddhyati/  
sarva-kdryaparadhyatvan ndparddhyanti chdnganah//

40. *ibid.* 19-21.

41. Maha. Anu. 46, 5.

42. *ibid.* 5-6.

43. *ibid.* 6.

44. *ibid.* 7.

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tive temperament which quickly responds to any offer of love or affection, and also that they excel in sincerity (or truthfulness ). 45 “There are others among them who are full of malice, covetous of honours, fierce in nature, unlovable, and impervious to reason. Women, however, generally deserve to be respected. Do ye men show them honour !” 46 The execution of the dharma of man depends upon woman; all pleasures and enjoyments also entirely depend upon her; men should therefore serve women and bend their wills before them . 47 In childhood, the father looks after her; the husband looks after her in youth; when she becomes old, her sons protect her; therefore, at no period of her life can a woman enjoy unrestrained freedom . 48 Women are the deities of prosperity; the person who desires affluence and prosperity should honour them. 4ft

We are also told in the Mahdbhdrata that the Goddess of Prosperity ( Srth ) 50 resides within the woman who is given to truth and sincerity and who pays due respect to the gods and the Brahmanas , 51 who is pleasing and auspicious in appearance, and is gifted with virtues , 62 and the Goddess avoids those women who are inclined to sinfulness and uncleanness or impurity, or who are fond of disputes and quarrelling, or are indolent, sleepy or inclined to laz in ess, or those who often visit other people’s houses, or those who lack modesty . 53

45. *ibid.* 8 : “abalah svalpa-kaupindh su-hridah satya-jishrixivdh /” (“svalpa=ishad ayasena apart ey ah kaupino guhydchchadanapata

yasam, sadyoharyd ityarthah” – Nilakantha.)

46. *ibid.* 9.

47. ibid. 10 : “stri-pratyayo hi vai dharrno , rati-bhogas cha kevalah/  
paricharyd namaskaras tadayatta bhavantu vah //”

48. ibid. 14.

49. ibid. 15 : “sriya etah striyo nama satkdryd bhutim ichchhatd /  
pdlitd nigrihxta cha srih strx bhavati Bharata//”

50. Maha. Anu. 11.

51. ibid. 11, 11 : “satya-svabhdvdrrjava-samyutasu vasdmi deva-  
dvija-pujikasu/”

52. ibid. 11, 15: “pnya-darsanasu saubhdgya-yuktdsu gundnvtid\$u/ M

53. ibid, 11, 12-13 : “parasya veimdbhiratdm alajjam/

papam achokshdm avalehinim cha  
vyapeta-dhairydm kalaha-priyam cha /  
nidrdbhibhutdm satatam Saydnam  
evam-vidham tarn parivarjaydmi/”

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Uma the wife of God Siva, was once asked to discuss the subject of woman's duties with a view to give an authoritative statement to the world, so that the course of conduct laid down by her “will be followed from generation to generation ;” 54 she is then said to have given a detailed description of what a woman should do and what she should not do (stri-dharmah) \*\* These dharmas are generally in agreement with what has been said already in connection with the wife's duties in the family, – to serve her husband and his elders, to act as her husband's companion in the performance of all dharmika acts, to be sweet in speech and manners, and so forth. 5 ®

In the Santi-parva, Bhishma advises Yudhishtira that if any warrior-kings died in the Great War without leaving male issues, their daughters should be crowned as Queens of the respective countries . 57

In the Anusasana-parva we are also told that on the whole the woman cherishes a deeper attachment ( sneha ) for her children than man . 58 The woman, in general, is said to be capable of loving more strongly and more profoundly than man . 69

The same Epic has opined that woman should not be forced to marry or live with a person whom she does not like. It says: “Manu does not speak highly of the practice of a girl living with a person whom she does not like. Living as a wife with a person whom she does not like produces disgrace and sin .” 60 And, there is an instance in Mahdbhdrata, in which a woman was not merely saved from marrying one whom she disliked, but was also given assistance to marry the man of her choice: Bhīshma captured the three daughters of the King of Kāśī (Benares) in order to marry them over to his brother; but the eldest intimated to him that she had already fallen in love with the King of Saubā who had

54. Maha. Anu. 146. 10 : “i lokeshveshd gatih sadd”.

55. ibid. 12.

56. ibid. 33-37.

57. kumaro nasti yesham cha kanyas tatrabhishechaya/Maha. &anti. 32-33.

58. Mahṣ. Anu. 12, 46 : “striyas tvabhyadhikah sneho na tathā purushasya vai”

59. ibid. 12, 52: “ striyah purusha-samyoge prxtir abhyadhika” ; and 12. 54 : “evam striyā maharaja adhikā pntir uchyate”

60. Maha. Anu. 44-23.

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accepted her love and that she would have chosen him only in the svayam-vara (sayam=L by oneself; uara=: choice of husband) arranged by her father; whereupon, Bhīshma, who was himself well-versed in dharma (dharma-jñāh) , after consultation with Brahmnas learned in the Vedas } sent her back to the lover of her choice. 61

If we turn our attention from the Epics to the Smritis, we meet with similar conceptions about the nature and the status of the woman.

Thus, Manu says that “women must always be honoured and respected (pujyā bhūshayitavyā cha) by the fathers, brother,

husbands and brothers-in-law who desire their own welfare". And, "where women are honoured (ptijyante), there the very Gods (devatdh) are pleased, but where they are not honoured, no sacred rite 62 even could yield rewards." The family ( kulam ) in which women (jdmayah- female members of the family) are passing their lives in suffering will soon crumble to pieces {vinasyati ofu). One who desires prosperity ( bhuti-kdma ) of family life should always respect the women-foik of the house. 63 In the family ( kule ) in which the wife { bhdryd ) is pleased with the husband, and the husband feels happy with the wife, prosperity ( kalydnam ) always resides. 64 The householder ( griht ) should always try to maintain peace with the female members of the house. 65 These statements by Manu do not give us much knowledge of the specific social status of the woman, but they give us a knowledge of the general attitude towards her in the family. 66

In Manu's opinion, women were created by the Almighty to be mothers, just as men were created to be fathers; therefore, he says, it has been ordained by the DharmaSdstras that all the activities belonging to dharma and yajna have to be performed by man and wife together. 67 Now, a maiden may be given in marriage, even

61. Maha. Adi. 102.

62. te kriyah = yagadi-kriya " – Kulluka. -

63. Man. iii, 55-59 ; cf. Yaj. i, 82.

64. ibid, iii, 60 ff.

65. ibid. iv> 180-81 ; cf. Yaj, i, 157-8.

66. See also chapter vi, section 2.

67. Man. ix, 96.

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though she has not attained the proper marriageable age, if a handsome suitor of equal varna and excellent qualities ( utkrushta ) is found. But, on the other hand, a maiden should never acquiesce in her guardian's desire to give her away to a man of bad character or even lacking any good quality (guna-htna ) . She should rather prefer to remain unmarried in her father's house till her

death ( d-marandt ). Or, she may wait for three years after she has attained puberty ( ritumat : ), after which period, if her guardians fail to arrange for her marriage, she may herself ( svayam ) choose her match suited to her ( sadrisam ) and marry him . 68

This seems to give a good deal of freedom to the young girl in the family at least in the matter of choosing her life-companion. But at other places, Manu and other Smritikaras are not prepared to allow any kind of independent activity to women , 69 without consultation or permission of the male members of the family; as already pointed out, she is subject to the guardianship of the father during her childhood, of her husband during her youth, and of her sons after the death of her husband. She is not allowed to do anything independently ( svdtantryena ) even in her own home . 70 Vatsyayana, who generally holds more liberal views than Manu about the fair sex, also looks upon unrestrained independence for women with disapproval; for he gives instructions as to the manner and the ways by which the citizen ( ndgaraka ) should protect his womenfolk ( antah~pura ) 71 and his wife ( data ). 72

We have also seen in a previous Chapter how the Smriti-karas have disposed of some of the samskdras , intended to sanctify the human body, in the case of the woman. In her case, they are to be carried out without the recitation of sacred texts (mantras ). 73 Again, for woman, the marriage ceremony is equivalent to the upanayana or initiation ceremony of the boy; serving the husband

68. Man. ix, 88-92 ; also cf. Yaj. i, 64 ; Vis. xxiv, 40-41 ; Vas. xvii, 69-71 ; Gau. xviii, 20-23 ; Bau iv, 1, 11-14.

69. Man. v, 148 : ( – na bhajet strī svatantratam ).

70. Man. v, 147-48 (na svdtantryena kartavyam kinchit karyam griheshvapi) ; cf also, Yāj. i, 85-86 ; Vis. xxv. 12-13 ; Vas. v. 1-3 ; Gau xviii, 1 ; Bau iii, 3, 44-5 ; Kṣt. 930 ; and Man ix, 2-3 (na stri svdtantrayam arhati).

71. Kant, v, 6 ; iv, 2, 72-84. 72. ibid, v, 6, 43 ft.

73. Man. ii, 16 ; Yāj. i, 13 ; Vis. xxvii, 13.

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{pati-sevd) is equivalent to serving the teacher (guru) , and residing

in the husband's house and doing her household duties (grihdrtha) is equivalent to the daily sacrifices and worship of fire ( agni-parik~riyd) by man . 74 Sacrifice by a woman displeases gods ; 75 indeed the woman who offers an agnihotra sacrifice (burnt oblation) will sink into hell (naraka ) 76

Harlta informs us that in early times there were two classes of women, the brahma-vadiru, i.e., those proficient in metaphysical knowledge which was a life-long pursuit for them and the sadyo - vadhu i.e., those who studied only till their marriage and preferred to lead the life of married housewife . 77 Therefore, says Harlta, women are not on the same level of status as the Sudras; for, he argues, the three varnas cannot be bom from the womb of a Sudra woman ! 78 Therefore, he further proceeds, women must also undergo sacramental rites with Vedic mantra ^s . 79 But Madhavacharya, who quotes the above verses of Harlta, declares that this applied to women of ancient times. And, in support of this view, he also quotes the sage Yama, saying that women were formerly (purd kalpe) entitled to be initiated with the sacred mantras , and also to teach the Vedas and recite the Sdvitri mantra . 80

A woman in her monthly course is regarded “untouchable”. The husband should not approach (napagachchhet) his wife, even though he may be mad with desire (pramatto’pi) , when she is in her courses; nor should he sleep with her in the same bed; if he

74. Man. ii, 67 ; cf. Yaj. i, 13 ; Vis. xxii, 32.

75. Man. iv, 206.

76. Man. xi, 36-37.

77. Hfirlta, xxi, 23 (Quoted by Madhavacharya, in “Pardsarasam-hita”, Ed. by Islampurkar, Vol. i, Pt. ii, p. 82 : –

ata eva HarUenoktam : dvi-vidhd striyah/  
brahma-vadinyah sadyo-vadhvas cha/

tatra brahma-vadininam upanayanam agnindhanam vedadhyaya\*  
nam svagrihe cha bhiksdcharya iti /

sadyo-vadhunam tu upasthite vivahe kathanchit upanayana -  
matram kritvd vivdhah kdryah/

78. ibid, “na sudra-samah striyah na hi kudra-yonau kshatriyavaisya jayante” (HSr. xxi, 20-21).

79. ibid. 4< tasmdt chhandasd striyah samskaryah”/ (Har. xxi, 12).

80. ibid. U purd kalpe tu narinam” etc. ; see footnote No. 172, ch. iv.

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does so, his wisdom (prajna), energy ( tejdh ), strength ( balam ) Sight ( chakshuh ) and life-duration ( dyuh ) shall di min ish. 81 Such a woman becomes touchable or pure (vi-suddhyati) again by taking bath after the period is over. 82 A person even by merely touching ( sprishtvd ) a woman in her monthly course himself becomes impure and untouchable; he becomes pure (sudhyati) by taking a bath. 83 It is also said that the mouth of a woman is always pure, 84 and this is explained by saying that it is to be regarded as pure for the purposes of kissing or other intimacies. 85 Yajñavalkya has also said that woman inherits purity from the God Soma, sweet speech from Gandharva, and perfect purity again from Agni; therefore, women are always pure (medhya). 86 This again is explained by saying that women should be regarded as pure ( suddhah ) for the purposes of touching or embracing (spar tiling anadishu) . 87

Manu has a rather peculiar opinion about the nature of the fail' sex in general. <k It is the nature of women to seduce men in this world; 88 for that reason the wise never remain unguarded ( na pramddyanti) in the company of females (pramadasu) . 89 For, women are able to lead astray not only the ignorant, but even a learned man, and make him a slave of lust and anger (k awui-krodha-vaJanugam) . 90 Therefore, one should not sit in a lonely place with even one's own mother, sister or daughter; for the senses are powerful ( balavdn indriya-gramo) and master even a learned man. 91 Manu calls woman the temptress, ( pramada ), a noun derived from the verb pra-mad , which mean^ 'to intoxicate', or 'to inflame with passion'. The derivation itself may speak suggestively in respect of the nature of the woman. But we have already seen

81. Man. iv, 40-42 ; cf. also Yaj. i, 138.

82. Man. v, 66, Yaj. iii, 20.

83. Man. v, 85 ; Yaj. ii, 30.

84. Man. v, 130 ; ( nityam asyam suchi strinam), cf. Yaj. i t 187 ; Vis. xxiii, 49 ; Bau. i, 9, 2 ; Vas. xxviii, 8.

85. See Mitaksara , on Yaj. i, 187.

86. \* Yaj. i, 71.



87. Mitaksara on ibid.

88. (svabhdva esha ndrnam nardndm iha dushanam).

89. Man. ii, 213.

90. Ibid . ii, 214.

91. Ibid . ii, 215.

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that there are similar opinions expressed in the Mahdbharata , too, on certain grounds and in certain contexts; we therefore cannot accuse Manu, as is done by some, as being the only writer with such a view of the woman-kind for, like the Mahdbhdrata , Manu, too, has shown great regard for womankind in different contexts, as will be seen below.

In the family, says Manu, the grihastha should regard his daughters as the highest objects of tenderness; he should bear their offences without resentment . 92 A true householder should respect his elder sister and father's or mother's sister as his own mother (mdtri-vad) . 93 The mother is the most venerable person in this world – even more than the father. More than one Dharma-iastra- writers have declared that the father is a hundred times more venerable than the teacher, but the mother is a thousand times more venerable than even the father ! 94 The mother's place in the family affairs is on the same footing as that of the father and the teacher. One should always do what is agreeable to these three, even though one may be grievously offended by these . 95 When these are pleased one gets all the rewards in this world and the next. As long as they live one should always inform and consult them about all that he proposes to do “in thought, word or deed, for the sake of the next world .” 96 Every other dharma must be regarded as subordinate to the dharma of honouring these three . 97 Obedience to father, mother as well as elder brother is expected of every person . 98 These and the Guru, the teacher, should never be offend- ed . 99 One who casts off (tyajet) his mother has to pay the very

92. Man. iv, 185 : U duhita kripaiiam param . , tasmad etair adhikshptah sahetasamjvarah sada/ /”

93. Man. ii, 133 : f matrivad vnttim atishfhet \* ; cf. Vis. xxxii, 3.

94. Man. ii, 145 ; Yaj. i, 35 ; Gau. vi, 51 ; Vas. xiii, 48.

95. Man. ii, 225 : ‘ ndrtendpyavamantavyd \* ; cf. Vis. xxxi, 1-3 ; Gau. xxi, 15 ; Ap. i, 14, 6.

96. Man. ii, 235-36 : \*tat tat nivedayet tebhyo mano-vak-kaya-karmabhih’ ; cf. Vis. xxxi, 6.

97. Man. ii, 237 : “ esha dharmah pa rah sdkshdd upadharmd’nya uchyate”

98. Man. ii, 225-37 ; Vis. xxxi, 1.

99. Man. iv, 162 ; Ap. i, 1, 14 ; Gau. xxi, 5.

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high penalty of six hundred panas; 100 such a man, moreover, should never be invited at any sacrificial ceremonies (havya-kavyah) . vn

In this connection, it is highly interesting to note the views of Varahamihira 102 (or Varahamihara) on women. Though Varaha\* mihira was an astronomer and wrote primarily on jyotisha-sdstra (astronomy and astrology), he has also touched upon a few other topics^ in the course of his discussion m one of his works . 103 He seems to have felt rather strongly that injustice was done to women by men of his times, or perhaps even before his times. “It is women who adorn jewels, women are not adorned by the splendour of jewels,” he remarks, “for, women can capture the hearts of men even without jewels but jewels without being displayed on the bodies of women cannot do this . 104 There is no other jewel created by the Lord of men but the jewel of woman which is capable of giving delight to man by hearing about it, by sight, by touch, and by thinking about it. With her help, dharma, artha, son and pleasures of the senses are possible. Hence, the frail fair sex should ever be regarded in the home as the goddess of prosperity (griha-lakshmi) and treated with respect ( mana ) and dignity (or glory, vibhava ). 105 I am convinced,” adds Varahamihira, “that those who disregard the qualities (gundn) of women and talk about their short-

comings (or faults, doshari) in an ascetic (or cynical) mood must be

100. Man. viii, 389 ; Yaj. li, 237 ; Vis. v, 163.

101. Man. iii, 157 ; Yaj. i, 224 ; Vis. lxxxii, 23, 29.

102. Of the first half of the 6th Century, lived in Ujjaini.

103. In his Bnhat-samhita, he has, for instance, written chapters on "The Traits of Women" ( stri-lakshanam , ch. 70); "In Praise of Women" ( stri-prasamsa, ch. 74); "On Amiability" (saubhdgya-karanam,

ch. 75) ; "On Union of Man and Woman" ( pum-stri-samayogah ). See Brihatsamhita, Ed. by Dr. H. Kem, Benares, "Bibliotheca Indica" Series, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Calcutta, 1865. (Eng. tr. by N. Chidambaram Iyer, Madura, 1884. Marathi tr. with text by J. H. Athalye, Jaganmitra Press [ Ratnagiri, Bombay, 1874.)

104. ratnanl'vibhushayanti yoshd, bhushyante vanitd na ratna-kantydj cheto vanxta harantyaratnd, no ratndni vindnganangct~samgdt/ / Brihatsamhita, 74, 2.

105. srutam drishtam sprishtam smritam api nrindm Ihddajananam / na ratnam sribhyo'nyat kpcuchid api kritam lokapatind/ / \* n dardham dharmdrthau suta-vishaya-saukhyani cha tato/

rihe lakshmyo mdnydh satatam abala mana-vibhavaiah/ /

ibid. 4.

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themselves bad men; such talk by them is not inspired by bona fide motives (sadbhava) . 106 For, tell me honestly/' asks Varahamihira r "what fault do women have which has not been shown in their behaviour by men? Women have been driven into mis-deeds by men shamelessly, but women are superior in virtues. Here is what Manu has said in this connection: 107 Soma (The Moon) gave them purity; Gandharvas (the Celestial Musicians) gave them cultured speech (sikshitdm giram); Agni (the God of Fire) has granted them freedom to eat anything; hence, they are (as pure) as gold. 108 The Brahmanas are pure in their feet; the cow on her back; the goat and the dog in their mouths; but women are pure ( medhyah ) all over (sarvatah) . 109 Women are incomparably pure (pavitram); they are never defiled; their menses destroy all their

blemishes. 110 Those homes in which virtuous women who are dis-respected curse them are destroyed entirely as if struck by the Goddess of destruction. 113 Whether as the wife or as the mother, man is born of woman; hence, oh ungrateful ones who want to slander women (to whom you owe your very existence), how can you ever gain happiness ? 112 Mutual fidelity is enjoined equally for the husband as well as for the wife and its violation by either is censured equally by the sastras; but men disregard this, whereas

106. ye'pyangandnam pravadanti dosha , vairdgya-margerui guqan  
vihaya/ m te durjana me manaso vi-tarkah f sad-bhava-vaky dm  
na tani tesham/ / ibid. 5.

107. prabriita satyam kataro'ngananam dosho'sti yo nacharito

manushyaih / dharshtyena pumbhih pramada nirastah ,

gunadhikas ta Manuna'tra choktamf / ibid. 6.

108. somas tasdm adachchhaucham gandharvah sikshitdm giram /  
agnis cha sarva-bhakshitvam iasmdn nishka-samah striyah / !

ibid. 7.

109. brahmanah pddato medhyah gdvo medhyas tu prishthatah/  
ajdsva mukhato medhyah striyo medhyas tu sarvatah / /

ibid 8.

110. striyah pavitram atulam naita dushyanti karhichit /

masi mdsi rajo hyasam dushkritanyapakarshati/ / ibid. 9.

111. iamayo yani gehani iapantyapratipujitdh/

tani krityd-hatanivd vinaiyanti samantatah/ / ibid. 10.

112. jay a vd sydj janitri vd sambhavah stri-krito nr mam f

kritaghnas taylor ninddm kurvatamvah kutah sukham?/ f

ibid. 11.

women do not; hence women are superior to men. 110 The man who becomes faithless to his wife can be purified of his sin if he wears the donkey's skin with the hair outside and begs alms for six months; with the announcement : 'I have been faithless to my wife; please give me alms!'

114 Man's sex desire is not abated even at the age of hundred; it abates in him only by loss of power; whereas in women it is controlled by their own fortitude (dhairya) , 115 What an impudence is it on the part of those bad men who indulge in slandering innocent women, which is comparable to the impudence of the robber who accosts the very person whom he robs and cries out at him : 'Halt, you robber !'

116 The sweet talks which man bestows on the woman in privacy he forgets afterwards; on the contrary, the woman, out of deep fidelity, embraces even her dead husband and enters the funeral pyre."

117 Though Varahamihira has written well-known treatises on the sdstras of jyotisha (astronomy), he is not regarded as a dharma-Sdstra authority; yet his views are striking as those of a thinker of the times; and it may also be that he is voicing the opinion of other thoughtful men of the times too.

113. dampatyor vyutkrame doshah samah sastre pratishthitah/  
nara na tarn avekshante tenatra varam anganah// ibid. 12.

114. bahir-lomna tu shan-masan veshtitah khara-charmana /  
ddrdtikramarie bhiksham dehityuktvad visuddhyati// ibid. 13.

It may be noted here that Apastamba would award the same punishment to the man who proves unfaithful to his wife : \* dara-vyatikraml  
kharajinam bahir-loma paridhaya dara-vyatikramaie bhiksham iti  
saptadgdrani charet/sa vrittih shan-masan/

— Apastamba. i, 9, 8.

i 115. na iatendpi varshandm apaiti madan&sayah/

tatradaktya nivartante nara dhairyena yoshitah //

Brihatsamhita , op. cit. 14.

116. aho dharshtyam a-sadhunam nindatdm anaghah striyah /  
mushnatam iva chaurdnam tishpxa chaureti jalpatdm// ibid « 15.

117. pwrushas chafulani kammindm

kurute yani raho na tani paichdt/  
sukritajnatayangand gatasun

ava guhya pravisanti sapta-jihvam// ibid. 16.

This indicates that the custom of sati , burning herself to death on the funeral pyre of the departed husband by the wife, was in existence in Varahamihira's times.

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Women who have no one to protect them, who are sterile, who have no sons, whose family is extinct, widows who are faithful to their departed husbands, and women afflicted with diseases, have to be given protection by the King. So also, the King must protect the property of such women, and punish their relatives in case the latter misappropriate their property during their life-time . 118

Sex-union with sisters by the same mother, with unmarried maidens, with females of the lowest castes, with the wife of a friend, or with the wife of a son, is a heinous crime – a mdhd-pdtaka ; m such conduct is equivalent to violating the Guru's bed, and has the same punishment prescribed . 120 Sex union with a woman given to drinking is a sin of the second order ( upa-pdtaka ) which must be punished by the expulsion of the man from his caste . 121

The husband of a widow who has remarried must not be entertained at a sacrifice . 122 Such a woman is called a punar-bhu, and has no social status; and her husband would be generally censured in the society.

The one great issue which presents itself to our mind when we consider the position of woman in India is with regard to her place in the scheme of the dsramas. It is true that in the early Hindu India, the woman could freely avail herself of the dsrama - vyavasthd in the same way as man did, as the mention of a number of learned women of the times shows. But later, women, along with the Sudras, were not taken into account, so far as the management of life through the dsrama stages is concerned, by the Dharma-Sdstras. Of course, along with this we must also remember that Vatsyayana, \$ukra~Ntti and the Mahabharata mention a scheme of education in the sixty-four arts for women, and Vatsyayana also says that they should be taught the fastras too. This implies that according to these authorities, generally speaking, both men as well as women

118. Man. viii, 28-29 ; Vis. iii, 65.

119. Man. xi, 59 ; Yaj. in, 231 ; Vis. xxxvi, 4-7 , Gau. xxi, 1 ; Bau. ii, 2, 13 ; Ap. i, 21 ; 8-9, 17-18.

120. Man. xi, 171 ; Yaj. iii, 233 ; Vis. xxxiv, 2 ; liii, 1 ; Vas. xx, 15-16; Gau. xxiii, 12-13, 32.

121. Man. xi, 67 ; Yaj. iii, 236-37 ; 239 ; Vis. xxxvii, 13, 31, 33 ; Gau. xxi, 1, 11 ; Vas. i, 23.

122. Man. iii, 166 ; Yaj. i, 224 ; Gau. xv, 16.

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should be educated, but the content of education was conceived along different lines for men and for women, and further, women were not expected to undergo the hard and rigorous life of the Jirama-discipline like boys but to stay at home and pursue studies – at least until marriage. This is as far as brahmacharydsrama is concerned. The grihasthdsrama is a jomt dsrama for both the man and his wife; and here also, the content of the dsrama discipline and the modes of behaviour prescribed are naturally bound to .be different for the two parties, though generally speaking they are considered to be equal partners in the home. The vanaprasthdsrama and the samnydsdsrama do not seem to be meant for women, probably because of the hardship involved in these, though here, too, we have instances m very early literature of women who led the life of samnydsirus.

The explanation given for the exclusion of women from the dsrama scheme is that her 'life is so much related to man, and that the lives of the grihastha and his dharma-patni are mutually adjusted according to the Dharma-Sdstra. We have already seen, for example, in the chapter on Education, how the nuptials and the life of a housewife are considered for the woman as equivalent to the brahmacharya and the grihasthdsrarria of man. There is historical evidence, as we have narrated elsewhere, that vdrtaprasthdsrama and samnydsdsrama were available for women; and in actual practice, according to the Hindu theory, with the permission and consent of the husband, a woman could enter the vdnaprastha or the samnyasa dsrama , just as a man could enter these with the consent of his wife. Usually, of course, the man and wife enter these two dsramas together, in theory at least. So far as the first dsrama is concerned, however, the great question that presents itself to us is : Why should woman be denied the right and privilege to learn and to teach systematically, which the male individual gets and gathers and may also impart – why should that discipline and purpose of the Brahmacharydsrama be denied to the woman ? Apart from

the few names of women-teachers that we have noted, almost all teachers were males. Is the natural inherent difference to be regarded as such a defect in the female sex as to be the cause of the absence of such rights in the case of woman ?

The answer to all this is given by saying, as we have seen, that

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the asraksana for the woman to learn is the home. Woman's part was perhaps supposed to be in the conserving and propagation of the race; and these functions were probably thought to be naturally inherited by her, and as not in need of training through the dsramas, as man required. Also, the burden of maternal duties was probably thought to be too heavy to add any other liabilities upon her. It is extremely difficult to decide to what extent this can be proved to be true. The woman is also denied many of the samskaras including that of upanayana. Here also, she is supposed to become a dvijid when she marries. Now, the explanation offered in support of all this seems to amount to this, that the lives of man and woman after marriage were considered as one and the woman could never be thought of independently of married life. But then, in this connection, the questions of perpetual widowhood, absence of divorce, and absence of a public career for woman are three issues very difficult to answer. Also, if the theory that the life of man and woman who are married to each other is one and sacred be granted as true, how could it be possibly maintained that man may marry, under any circumstances, more than one wife ?

In a community like the Hindu which worships more than one deity 123 and has enshrined them, the way in which he has divinized

123. In connection with the idol-worship of the Hindus, the following observations by Stanley Rice in his book Hindu Customs and Their Origins , (Allen and Unwin, London, 1937) are well worth quoting:

"Side by side with the higher forms of religion (in India, which Rice has described in the preceding pages) persisted the aboriginal cults and superstitions which are mainly responsible for the branding of Hinduism with the name of idolatry – an accusation about as just as to judge Catholicism by the tawdry images in its churches. The persistence of these cults indicates that at no time did the Aryan religion – and still less the philosophical speculations – ever really capture the popular imagination. The blending of the races led inevitably to the blending of the



religion. The great temples grew up dedicated to the greater Gods, Siva and Vishnu in their various forms, to their female counterparts and to the deified heroes, Rama and Krishna, incarnations of Vishnu. With the coming of the bhakti movement – at any rate in the eyes of the masses – the religion lost all or nearly all of its esoteric meaning in ecstatic and unreasoning adoration, while in the villages still continued the worship of the minor ‘village deities’, the Grdma-devatas, particularly of those malevolently inclined Goddesses whose special care was the physical ills of mankind This multiplicity of Gods and godlings

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Gods as well as Goddesses and reveres them ought to reflect in a significant manner his attitude towards the female sex. The deities worshipped by him as Gods and the ancient personalities who have risen in his view to the divine status by dint of their virtuous and illustrious deeds and character and in fact are believed by him to be the very incarnations (avatara) of God, and in whose memory there have been shrines and temples erected all over the country throughout the centuries past, are usually worshipped as couples, as Gods together with their inseparable Goddesses. And, indeed, in naming and addressing them jointly, the name of the Goddess has precedence, as for instance, in lMkIi7u l2i -Ndrdyana, 12r>

has given rise to the idea of polytheism, which, however, is foreign to the true esoteric Hinduism. Properly viewed in that light they are only the aspects of the One God. Even the Hindu Trinity – Trimurti – is only the expression of the same idea. It contemplates Creation, Preservation, and Regeneration which combine the great principles of Nature and therefore of the Universe

“Thus when Hinduism is spoken of as idolatry, there is only a measure of truth in the accusation ; nor is it enough to protest that the Hindu does not worship the idols but only the principles which they represent. That is an accusation which applies equally to certain forms of Christianity, as anyone can testify who has seen the little dolls held out to be blessed by the Pope in the Vatican. . . .

“But it is an entire misconception to suppose that the purer esoteric Hinduism has any part or lot in such worship. Most of what is seen is nothing but the shell ; it may be affirmed that very few believe in it. Hinduism properly so-called appeals, unlike Judaism, less to the emotions than to the intellect. Its limitations are the limitations of man’s reasoning powers and the very difficulty which has so often, been found

in defining it is due to this cause. Its intellectualism – its insistence that knowledge is the way of Salvation and that ignorance is the cause of all back-sliding – is indeed its weakness, for that is a state of mind that very few are either inclined or will seek to attain” (pp. 212-14).

124. Lakshmi, the wife of Vishnu (or N dray ana), is the Goddess of prosperity and abundance.

125. Vishnu is so called because he preserves the world. The name is thus explained : –

yasmdd-visvam idam sarvam tasya saktya mahdtmanah/  
tasmd evo'chyate vishnur visa-dhatoh pravesanatf f

N dr ay ana is an epithet of Vishnu. It is explained thus : –

Apo ndr it i prokta dpo vai nara-sunavah/

Td yad asyayanam purvam tena narayanah smfitah//

Man. i, 1(X

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Umd u(i -Mahesa , 127 Sita-Rama , 128 Rddhd-Knshna and Rukminl-Krishna . 12 9 Further, some Goddesses – like some Gods – are also worshipped and enshrmed mdependently m their own rights, as for instance, Laksrru , Pdrvati (in the name and form of Durga, or Jagad-Ambd, or Kali ) 730 and Saraswati.

These are the ways in which the womankind was judged in old India. The judgments may often seem contradictory to each other and at places even self-contradictory. She is a devatd (Goddess) as well as a pramada (seducer) . She is sincere or truth-loving and yet she has weakness of character, lack of judgment and of balance of mind. She is the queen of the house, but she does not deserve freedom and independence, even in the family affairs. What may apparently seem as a contradiction of statement, however, is in truth not a contradiction. The Sdstra-kdras and the Epic and other writers have viewed the problem of woman from different points of view and during different periods. And since at each time the universe of discourse is changed, the views expressed appear to be contradictory. Thus, from the point of view of family stability and happiness, the woman is to be respected and honoured; and, in view of the inherent weakness of her nature she is conceived as needing

the protection of man, and to that extent, dependent on man. But if we are minded to look at the Hindu conception and treatment

Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesa form the sacred Trinity, Brahma being concerned with creation, Vishnu with preservation and Mahesa with destruction out of which comes regeneration, of the world. Strict Hinduism regards these as aspects of but one God called Trimurti.

126. Umd, the daughter of Himavat (The Himalayas), also called Pdrvati (the offspring of parvata, mountain). The name Uma is explained by poet Kalidasa thus: Umeti (i.e. 'Oh do not' [practise penance]) matra tapaso nishiddha, paschad Umdkhyam sumukhi jagdama – Kumar a. i. 26.

127. Maheia = Great God (Maha -f isa), an epithet of Siva (= auspicious).

128. Sitd is regarded as an avatara of Lakshmi, just as Rama is regarded as an avatara of Vishnu.

129. Krishiiia, too, is regarded as an avatara of Vishnu. Radha was the cowherdess (gopi) who showed exemplary devotion (bhakti) to Krishna, and so she is divinized and her name immortalized together with that of Krishna. Rukmini is the wife of Krishna.

130. Jagad =» Universe; ambd = mother. Kail (blackness) is supposed to be a fierce and destructive avatara of Pdrvati,

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of womankind on the whole, we must admit that the Hindu seers have honestly and sincerely made repeated inquiries into the problems of the nature and position of the fair sex for the maintenance, growth and development of the best and the best of the human heritage in any society. It may be that due to several reasons, which must have formed the signs and characteristics of the times, they seem to be conservative in one cycle and liberal in another regarding certain aspects of the life of woman. But, along with these and in spite of these strong opinions, or even prejudices, against the nature of woman, the Hindu sages have never failed woman in giving her entire due as a maiden, a wife, a mother, a householder and as a matron in the economy, upkeep and exaltation of the family and its best traditions

In connection with this whole question of feminine psychology

and the various writers' views on the same, it must be borne in mind, before adjudging a writer as a champion or a hater of women, that his views are based upon and are reactions to the social, cultural and other environmental conditions of his times. What Viola Klein has said about Freud applies to all critical and honest students of feminine psychology. "In Freud's writings" observes Klein, "we find ... on the one hand the wonder at the enigmatic' woman, the approach to feminine psychology as a 'riddle' to be solved and a theory which views the development of femininity as a particularly 'difficult and complicated process'; on the other hand there is the contempt . . . for her inferior intellectual capacities, her greater vanity, her weaker sexual instincts, her disposition to neuroses and hysteria, and for her constitutional passivity . . . Judgments on the strength or weakness of the sex-impulse in women (passed by Freud and other psycho-analysts) are not based on organic facts but are in accordance with a cultural pattern and milieu. . . . They are also valid, most probably with corresponding modifications, in every society with strong patriarchal traditions ." 181 However, even among psycho-analysts, a new school of thought is developing, backed by careful anthropological and

131. Klein, Viola : *The Feminine Character* , pp. 84-89. Kegan Paul, London, 1948. This book presents a study of the ideas of different authorities— Havelock Ellis, Weininger, Freud, Helen Thompson, Terman and Myles, Margaret Mead, W. I. Thomas, etc\*— -on woman's psychology?

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sociological studies made in different cultures, which lays stress on the differences in mental development owing to differences in cultural patterns in which individuals are brought up in different regions of the world. "The realization that in different societies women fulfil different social functions and accordingly display different attitudes and mental characteristics has shattered the idea of the all-powerful influence of anatomy and biological facts on character-traits/' 132

We must not, however, commit the opposite error of over-stressing the social and environmental influence to the disregard of natural biological and anatomical endowments in the sexes which make a difference in moulding and developing their mental characteristics. The significance of guna (the natural psycho-biological endowment) is no less important than that of desa (region, place) and kala (time, period) here. The potentialities as well as the

limitations of both these factors in the psychological development of each of the sexes in their own different way must be reckoned with. In the same period of history, regional and cultural differences may lead to variations in the character traits of the women and of the men of these regions. So also, even in the same region or country different conditions may operate at different periods in history leading to different character traits in the women as well as in the men of that country. Furthermore, in this connection, it should be remembered that the judge no less than the judged are influenced by the conditions of the place and the time and react to the same, each in his own way. It may also be noted that till this day, there has been no full length scientific study of the problem of feminine psychology based on a careful analysis of the natural as well as environmental differences between the sexes. Almost all the studies available are based on observation of female behaviour in the specific cultural contexts in which they were made, and therefore whatever validity they may possess is limited to the respective cultural context. None of them can tell us much about the natural and universal psychological differences among the sexes.

132. *ibid.*

## CHAPTER VHI

### THE FOUR VARNAS

Honour and shame from no condition rise;

Act well your part, there all the honour lies .

– Alexander Pope: Essay on Man , Epistle IV. 1

AVTE have already noted the fact that just as  
 ” dsramadharma is formulated primarily with  
 reference to the conduct of the individual's life in the world, so  
 there is another co-ordinate system, devised by the Hindu, called  
 the varnadharma which is formulated primarily with reference to  
 the society in which the individual lives. 1 Of course, both the  
 kinds of dharmas concern themselves with the organisation and  
 management of the individual as well as the group or the society.  
 Together, the two schemes are known as varna srama-vyavastha, the  
 organization (vyavasthd) ^f-varna-and-dsrarria; and they are to be  
 looked upon and practised as interrelated and inter-coordinated  
 parts of a composite whole. But the difference between the two  
 may be said to lie in the manner of approach and emphasis in the

organisation of man's life and his activities in regard to the two kinds of dharmas . In the scheme of the asramas (dsrama-vyavasthd ) , the problem is approached from the point of view of the training or nurture (Jrama) of the individual through specifically provided environments at different stages of his life; in the varna-organization (varna-vyavasthd) on the other hand, the problem is considered from the point of view of the larger group, and the individual's position is defined in this group with reference to his innate nature ( gund ), his tendencies and dispositions. We have considered the dsrama scheme and its purpose and method in the preceding chapters. In this chapter we take up the uar^a-organisation for our review. We may begin with the views of Hindu

1. See the opening remarks in Ch. III.

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thinkers on the problem of wir^a-organisation, and then in the light of this and of some pertinent modem views, we shall try to evaluate the same.

I

There are several passages in the oldest Vedic literature dealing with the origin of the varnas. The oldest is the hymn in the Purusha-sukta of the Rig-Veda which says that the Brdhmana varna represented the mouth of the purusha, – which word may be translated as ‘the Universal Man’, referring perhaps to mankind as a whole, – the Raj any a (i.e. Kshatriya) his arms, the Vaisya his thighs and the Sudra his feet. 2 Zimmer and others have held the opinion that this Purusha hymn was a later interpolation and that the institution of caste was not Rigvedic, but of later origin. 3 But it has been shown that there are other passages, apart from the Purusha-Sukta, in which the division of society into varnas , though not in the rigid form of later times, is mentioned. Thus, in Rig-Veda (Vni, 35, 16-18), the three varnas , the Brahma, Kshatram, anl Visah are mentioned; while in Rig-Veda (1, 113, 16) , the four varnas are referred to thus: ‘One to high sway (i.e. Brahmana), one to exalted glory (i.e. the Kshatriya), one to pursue his gain (i.e. the Vaisya) and one to his labour (i.e. the Sudra), – all to regard their different vocations, all moving creatures hath the Dawn awakened/ 4 Further, the division into four varnas is here correlated to the

duties of each varṇa. Haug's opinion on the origin of the institution of caste seems to be correct. "It has been of late asserted," he observes, "that the original parts of the Vedas do not know the system of caste. But this conclusion was prematurely arrived at without sufficiently weighing the evidence. It is true that caste system is not to be found in such a developed state; the duties

2. Rg. x, 90, 12 :

brahmano'sya mukham asid bahu rajanyah kr̥tāh /  
uru tad asya yad vaiīyah padbhyam sudro ajdyata//

3. Colebrooke : Miscellaneous Essays , i, p. 309 note.

MaxMüller : Ancient Sanskrit Literature , p. 570 ; etc.

(From Muir : Ori. Sanskrit Texts , i, p. 12 f.)

4. Dutt : " Origin and Growth of Caste in India", Vol. I (1931), p. 39  
This book collects together relevant material on caste from the Vedas>  
the Brahmanas, the Sūtras and the Buddhist Jātakas .

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assigned to the several castes are not so clearly defined as in the law books and Purāṇas. But nevertheless the system is already known in the earlier parts of the Vedas, or rather presupposed. The barriers only were not so insurmountable as in later times ." 5

Reverting to the Puruṣa-Sukta , an allegorical meaning is suggested by the whole sukta with reference to the Puruṣa and the creation of varṇas from his limbs. The Puruṣa is described as being himself "this whole universe, whatever has been and whatever shall be ". 6 Further, we are also told that the moon sprang from his mind ( manaḥ )> the Sun from his eyes, Indra and Agni were created out of his mouth, and air or wind from his breath . 7 Again, from his navel arose the atmosphere ( antarikṣham ) , from his head the sky, from his feet the earth ( bhūmi ), and from his ear the four quarters ( diśah ); in this manner, the worlds were created . 8

The Puruṣa-Sukta has been interpreted as having an allegorical significance behind it from another point of view also . 9 Thus, the mouth of the Puruṣa from which the Brahmanas are created is the seat of speech; the Brahmanas therefore are created to be

teachers and instructors of mankind. The arms are symbol of valour and strength; the Kshatriya's mission in this world is to carry weapons and protect people. It is difficult to interpret that portion of the hymn which deals with the creation of the Vaisyas from the thighs of the Purusha. But the thigh may have been intended to represent the lower portion of the body, the portion which consumes food, and therefore the Vaisya may be said to be created to provide food to the people. The creation of the Sudra from the foot symbolizes the fact that the Sudra is to be the 'footman', the servant of other varnas. The whole social organization is here conceived symbolically as one human being – the "Body Social", we may say – with its limbs representing the social classes based on the principle of division of labour. The Mahabharata states the

5. Quoted by Dutt : op. cit., i, pp.' 38-39. He also points out that Oldenberg and Geldner held similar views.

8. Big. x, 90, 2: "purusha evedam sarvam yad bhutam yach cha bh&vyam".

7. ibid, x, 90, 13. 8. ibid, x, 90, 14.

9. See Haug. "On the Origin of Brahmanism" , p. 4 (Quoted by Muir :

Oru Sansk. Texts , Vol. i, p. 14).

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same thing thus: Our obeisance to That ( Purusha ) who consists of Brahmanas in the mouth, Kashtras in the arms, Visah in the entire regions, stomach and thighs, and Sudras in the feet. 10

We also find that in the Vedic times there were no restrictions as regards particular occupations for persons belonging to a particular varna. Thus, a person born as a Brahmana could take to the occupation of a physician without thereby in any way degrading his social status. "With Soma as their sovereign lord the Plants hold colloquy and say: Oh King, we save from death the man whose cure a Brahmana undertakes." 11 A Brahmana rishi (sage) says: I am a poet, my father is a physician, my mother a grinder of corn. With our different views, seeking after gain, we ran as after cattle." 12 The Ribhus were skilled artisans; and yet they were given high divine honours. 13 And, of the descendants of the Brahmana rishi Bhrigu, some were reported to be experts in the



art of making chariots. 14 There is no trace of heredity defining the occupation of an individual in this early literature.

The Sudras of the Rigvedic period seem to be no other than the non-Aryans, the Dasas or the Dasyus who differed from the fair-skinned Aryas on account of their black complexion ( Krishna - tvach), flat-nose, unintelligibility of speech, absence of sacrificing among them (a-yajnan) , absence of the worship of God amongst them, and the prevalence of foreign customs which they followed (anya^vrata) , – all of which were obviously strange to the Aryas. 15 They were kept by the Aryans as slaves. There is no obvious explanation of the term Sudra which later came to signify the Dasas; it is, however, suggested that 'Sudra' was probably the name of some prominent Dasa tribe, and, in course of time, the word became synonymous with the whole community of slaves, by usage\*, just as at Athens the term Karian became synonymous with the word slaves. 10

It has also been shown that there were no restrictions in the Rigvedic society in the matter of diet and drink between the diffe-

10. MahS. Santi. 46. 11. Rig. x, 97, 22 ; from Dutt : op cit., p. 59.

12. Rig. ix, 112, 3 ; from ibid. pp. 59-60.

13. Rig. i, 161, 1-5 ; from ibid. p. 6.

14. Rig. x, 39, 14 ; from ibid. p. 60. 15. ibid. p. 60-63.

16. Dutt : op. cit., and "Carrib. Hist . Ind." – Ch. x, "Life and Customs in the Sutras", by Hopkins, p. 234.

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rent varnas such as we find in the later society . 17 Whatever food or drink was usual was common to all the varnas . So too, there was no 'higher' or 'lower' varna for matrimonial alliances. 18 " " "There were no definite restrictions on intermarriage between the different classes of the Aryan race; in fact there was no necessity, as the different groups in society, whatever might be their occupations, were by complexion, features, language and creed practically homogeneous. Nowhere in the Rig-Veda is any mention of a Vaisya being regarded as less pure than a Brahmana, and of social intercourse between the two as degrading to the latter ." 19 There are no ins-

tances recorded of mixed marriages in the Rig-Veda; but this happened, perhaps, as Dutt observes, due to the fact that the castes as separate communities prohibiting intermarriages did not exist in the Rigvedic period . 20 Several instances, however, occurring in the Rigvedic period and recorded in later literature, of such mixed marriages, are in fact known to us, like those between Yayati, a Kshatnya King and Devayani, the daughter of a Brahmana; of Dushyanta, a Kshatriya King and Sakuntala, supposed to be the daughter of a Brahmana sage. Similar are the cases, mentioned by the commentator , 21 of a rishi SyavaSva marrying the daughter of Kshatriya King Rathaviti; of the marriage of King Asanga with a woman of Angirasa family ; 22 and of a rishi Kakshlvan marrying the daughters of King Svanaya . 23

From the above account during the Vedic period, the varnas seem to have been 'open classes', to use a term of Cooley 24 They were not watertight compartments, the membership of which was determined by virtue of heredity only; they were, to use Cooley's words again, "more based on individual traits and less upon descent ." 25

Gradually, however, the varnas came to be distinguished from each other. Each varna became more and more marked off and separated from the other. The four varnas came to be addressed

17. See Dutt, op. cit., pp. 64 ff. 18. ibid. pp. 68 ff.

19. ibid. p. 68. 20. ibid.

21. On Rig. v, 61.

22. Rig. viii, 134.

23. Rig. i, 126 ; (from Dutt : op. cit., pp. 68-69).

24. See his \*Social Organization\*, Ch. and.

25. ibid. p. 239.

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mother belong to Magadha and Videha castes respectively; and so on. 74 And, inter-marriages between these new castes give rise to newer and newer castes, so that the process goes on multiplying. 75 . Here in this sloka (X, 11) , Manu has used the word Jditi as distinct

from varna. This iloka opens the topic concerning offsprings begotten on a woman of higher varna by a man of lower varna. Thus, the Suta, the Magadha and the Vaideha are so named according to their "jdti" ( jdtitah ). And, in the next sloka , Manu also uses the term Vama-samkarah, mixture of vamas, in this connection. 76 Though Manu refers to four vamas only, he mentions about fifty-seven jatis , as a result of varna-samkarah.

Here, it would be advantageous for us to firmly fix in our mind that the 'varna theory' of society is not to be confused with the 'jati-system' which we meet with today in the Hindu society, and which is usually described by the term 'caste-system'. The word caste was first used in India by the Portuguese to denote the several jatis 77 which they found existing here, and which have continued to exist since then, perhaps with additions. Dr. Dutt summarizes the most apparent features of the Hindu caste-system of to-day by pointing out that "the members of the different castes cannot have matrimonial connections with any but persons of their own caste; that there are restrictions, though not so rigid as in the matter of marriage, about a member of one caste eating and drinking with that of a different caste; that in many cases there are fixed occupations for different castes; that there is some hierarchical gradation among the castes, the most recognized position being that of the Brahmanas at the top; that birth alone decides a man's connection with his caste for life, unless expelled for violation of his caste rules, and that transition from one caste to another, high or low, is not possible. The prestige of the Brahman caste is the corner-stone of the whole organization." 78 These are the most salient features of the jati system or the caste-system into which

74. Man. x, 18-45.

75. Man. x, 11.

76. Man. x, 12 ; See also Y&j. i, 90-91.

77. N. K. Dutt : op. cit., p. 1. Also, P. Masson-Oursel & Others :  
\* Ancient India and Indian Civilization \ p. 78 ; J. A. Hutton : Caste in India , 2nd Ed. 1951, pp. 47 ff.

78. Dutt ; ibid. p. 3.

the original varna scheme of the Hindus has come to be evolved. The word 'jati' originates from the Sanskrit word 'jan' 'to take birth/ while the word 'varna' would mean 'colour'. Varna has also been derived from 'vri' 9 'to choose', meaning accordingly, 'choice of vocation'. Anyway, it has nothing to do, in its origin, with the purely family lineage principle involved in the word \* Jot ?.

The view that 'varna' and 'jati' are distinct and "essentially independent", though "by the reaction of principles on fact the two institutions may have become fused together" later on, 79 was put forward by E. Senart; this is generally accepted by both Iranian and Vedic scholars like Geldner and Oldenberg, as well as by Indologists like Barth and Jolly. 80 This theory "supposes a distinct value for the terms", jati and varna. 81 Senart has shown how the Aryans first used the term 'Ary a Varna' in Rigvedic literature to distinguish themselves from the 'Ddsa Varna', the enemies of the Aryans. 82 In the opinion of Senart, the word varna was used to denote the distinction between the Aryas and the non-Aryas; but it "was later split up, if I may so express it, so that it might apply no longer to these two primitive va'rnas, but to more numerous categories. It has not lost all traces of its origin. It does not signify caste in general and in the strict sense, but only 'the four castes'," 83 while the castes which are actually found in practice and which do not truly correspond with this theoretical fourfold division into varnas, were designated only by the law-books by the term "jati" 84 The water-tight compartments of the jiti-system therefore are due to later Brahmanic interpretation of the term varna, and, "to interpret the Vedic testimony by the Brahmanic theory of a more recent age, is to reverse the true order of things." 85

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Let us next take into consideration the classification of dharmas

79. Senart: Caste in India (Tr. by Boss. 1930), p. 153.

80. Masson-Oursel : op. cit, p. 83.

81. ibid. p. 83.

82. Senart : op, cit., pp. 122-123 (following Zimmer).

83. Senart: ibid. p. 128.

84. Senart; ibid. pp. 128-129.

85. Senart : ibid. p. 126.

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with reference to the vama scheme. With an obeisance to the Dharma Deity before proceeding to deal with this question, the wise Bhishma gives his views as follows: Control of anger, speaking the truth, justice (or equity or fairmindedness, samvibhdgah ), forgiveness, begetting children of one's own married wife, pure conduct, avoiding quarrel, uprightness (arjavam), and the maintenance of one's dependents ( bhritya ), these are the nine duties, common to all the four varnas (sdrva-varnikah) . 86 Then follows the familiar division of dharmas among the four varnas . Thus, teaching, self-control and the practice of tapas (austerities) are the specific (kevalam) duties of the Brahmanas; study, protecting people, performing sacrifices, making gifts, are the specific duties of a Kshatriya; study, making gifts, celebrating sacrifices and acquiring wealth by fair means are the specific duties of a Yaisya; and the Sudra, created "as the servant of the other three varnas " should never amass wealth ( samchayam ) for himself, for then "he makes the members of the three superior orders obedient to him. By this he would incur sin ." 87 He is to be maintained by the three other varnas. 8 \* Whatever he possesses, belongs to his master. 89 . Sacrifice, the Sudra can perform; but he is not held competent to recite svabu and sadha, or any other Vedic mantra 80 "Sacrificing, of course, is as much sanctioned for the Sudra as for the other three ." 91 There are two kinds of sacrifices which are common to all varnas, the sacrifice in the form of faith or belief (haddhayajna) in god and dharma, and what may be called the mental sacrifice {yajno mardshayd ) 92 in the sense of cultivating a discipline of non-attachment to material possessions . 93 Therefore, says Bhishma, the moral (nirn'ayah) of varna-dharma is that members of all the varnas should always, and by every possible means in their power, perform

86. 6§nti. 60, 7.

87. ibid. 60, 8-29.

88. ibid. 60, 31.

89. ibid. 60/ 36.

90. ibid. 60, 37.

91. ibid. 60, 40.

92. ibid. 60, 44-45.

93. Nilakajitha comments : “tathd cha marutse devato'ddeiena dravya-tyagatmake yajne sarve varnd adhikriyante , ityarthdh ”, i.e., all the varnds are entitled to make sacrifices by way of donating money or property with the intention of attending upon God.

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\$/ajna . 04 There is nothing in the three worlds (i.e. Heaven, Earth and the Low World) equal to ya]na\ therefore, it is said that every one, with his heart free from malice, and with faith as the holy foundation for his acts, should perform yajna to the best of his abilities and fullest satisfaction . 0,5

The Great God Mahesvara gives a similar account of the division of duties for the varnas . The duties common to all the varnas are: hospitability towards all (sarvdtithyam) , the pursuit of the three-fold objectives of life (viz., Dharma , Artha and Kama), and giving alms and gifts according to one's means . 96 Then, some of the specific duties of the Brahmana are: observance of fasts, listening to the intricacies of dharma , observance of courses of conduct laid down in the Vedas, attention to the Sacred Fire in the home, constant recitation of the Vedas, performance of sacrifices, and complete abstension from injuring any creature . 97 In addition to the specific duties of the Kshatriya already referred to above as mentioned by Bhlshma, he should also have “perseverance in acts that have been undertaken ” 98 by him, he should give punishment to offenders proportionate to the offences committed, and he should not hesitate to interfere in order to help the distressed . 99 The Vaisya's main duty is honest trade; and, as usual, the Sudra's duty consists in attendance upon the three other varnas . 100

For the Smritis , the common dharmas of the four varnas are: abstention from injury to any living creature ( a-himsa ), pursuit of truth ( satyam ), abstaining from unlawfully appropriating what belongs to another (a-steiyam) y purity of conduct and life (saucham)

94. ibid. 60, 53 :

sarvatha sarvada varnair yashtavyam iti nirnayahj  
na hi yajnasamam kmchit trxshu lokeshu vidyate/ /

95. ibid. \$0, 54 :

tasmad yashtavyam ityahuh purushenaniisuyata/

sraddha-pavitryamasritya yathdsakfi yatthechchhayd/ /

96. Maha. Anu. 141, 61-79.

97. ibid. 141, 36-41.

98. ibid. 141, 49.

99. ibid. 141, 51-52.

100. ibid. 141, 55-57 ; “siLsrushd cha dvijatishu”/. &usrusha means, literally, ‘desire to hear\ Le., obedience.

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and control of sense organs ( indriya-nigraha , indriya-samycimah ); 101 to these are also added self-restraint ( damah ), forgiveness ( kshama ), uprightness (drjavam) and generosity ( ddnam ). 102 The specific dharmas of each of the vamas are the same as noted above by us from other sources . 103 Manu summarizes them by saying: “Among the several duties, the most commendable ( visishtni ) are, teaching the Veda for the Brahmana, protecting the people ( rakshanam ) for a Kshatriya, and trading (vdrta) for a Vaisya .” 104

In times of adversity or distress (apad), however, the Brahmana may follow the occupations of the Kshatriyas; or he may even follow the occupations of the Vaisyas, if he is not capable to perform the duties of Kshatriya ( asaktah kshatra-dharmena) . 105 Only, there are certain reservations in this rule; the Brahmana should not, even when following the Vaisya’s occupations, sell wines, salt, sesamum seeds, animals having manes, bulls, honey, meat and cooked food, under any circumstances . 106 It follows, of course, that a Kshatriya could follow the VaKya’s occupations in times of adversity or distress. Whether the three higher vamas could follow the Sudra’s occupation of service in such conditions is not mentioned at all; but, it seems that they could not do so under any circumstance. In all such relaxations of rules of dharma , the relation of observable duties to the conditions existing in the particular time and place is viewed as of fundamental importance. For, says Bhishma, “dharma may become adharm and adharm may become dharma according to time-and-place ( dela-kala ) ; such is the significance and . power of time-and-place .” 307 \_

The Dharma-Sdstras, too have similar relaxations on the pres-

cribed occupations and duties of the four varnas in times of adversity. Thus, a Brahmana who cannot maintain himself by means

101. Man x, 63 ; Yaj. i, 122 ; Vis. u, 16-17.

102. Yaj. i, 122

103. Man. i, 88-91, and x, 74-80 ; Yaj. i, 118-19 ; Vis. u, 5-9, etc. of supra footnote 86 ff.

104. Man. x, 80. 105 Maha. Santi. 78, 1-2

106, ibid. 78, 4-5.

107. ibid. 78, 32 .

" bhavatyadharmo dharmo hi dharmadharmavubhavapt /  
karanad deia-kalasya de&a-kalah sa tadri&ah/ i"

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of the occupations specially prescribed only for him may adopt the Kshatriya's mode of life. If he is unable to subsist even by this, he may adopt the Vaisya's mode of life, i.e., trade, agriculture and cattle-rearing. The Kshatriya, of course, can adopt the Vajsyas' mode of living during times of adversity. But here again there are reservations; the Brahmana and the Kshatriya, when living upon agriculture, must carefully avoid injury to animals; and, when he has to take to commerce, he may sell the commodities which the Vaisya sells, but he must never sell cooked food and seasamum, stones, salt, cattle, human beings, dyed cloth as well as cloth made of hemp or flax or wool, fruits, roots, medical herbs, water, weapons, poison, meat, soma (wine), perfumes of all kinds, milk, butter, oil, wax, sugar, beasts of the forest, birds, liquors, indigo, lac, and all one-hoofed beasts . 108 Further a Vaisya who is unable to subsist by following his own duties and occupations (sva-dharmena) of trade and agriculture may maintain himself by following the Sudra's mode of life . 109

But the noteworthy point for Manu is that one should under no circumstances adopt the mode of life prescribed for the varna or varna higher than his own . 110 In general, "it is better to discharge one's own dharma incompletely (or imperfectly) ( vigunah ), than to perform completely that of another ( na parakyah swanu-



shthitah )” 111

During times of famine or in dire necessity when one is in danger of dying for want of food, acceptance of such a thing as a dog , 112 or a cow , 113 from even a Chandala , 114 for the purpose of eating, is no sin. A person accepting such food under such circumstances “is no more tainted by sin than the sky by mud /’ 115 Manu further gives “ten sources or means of subsistence” ( daJa jivana-hetavah) open to all men in adversity or distress; these are; leam-

108. Man. x, 81-89 ; Yaj. iii, 32-39 ; Vis. liv. 18-21.

109. Man. x, 98,

110. Man, x, 95-96 : – na tveva jydyasim vrittim dbhimanyeta karhichit/

111. Man, x, 97.

112. Man. x, 106.

113. Man. x, 107.

114. Man. x, 108.

115. Man. x, 104.

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ing, mechanical arts, work for wages (bhritih), service ( \$ev\$) f rearing cattle, trade ( vipmih ), agriculture, contentment (or fortitude, dhritih), begging ( bhaikshyam ) and receiving interest on money (kusidam) . 116

The rishi Markandeya narrates the story of how a Brahmana ascetic named KauSika was taught the principles of the varnas and the dharmas by Dharma-Vyadha (“Dutiful Hunter”) of Mithila . 117 This man, whose occupation was selling meat, was actually found “selling venison and the flesh of the buffalo .” 118 The Brahmana was surprised to find that this person was acclaimed to have been a most virtuous man even though he followed “such a dishonourable profession !” 119 But Dharma-Vyadha retorts to the Brahmana that he was only carrying out the dharma prescribed for him by his karma . “Fulfilling the duties of my own trade, to which I am

already destined by the creator, I carefully devote myself, O best of the twice-born ones (dvija) , to the service of my superiors as well as the elders ;” 120 besides, this hunter always spoke the truth, never envied any one, used to make gifts according to his means, and lived upon what was left after the service of the Gods, the guests and his dependents. He never spoke ill of any one; and he hated none . 1 - 1 “A person, even though bom of low lineage, may yet be a man of good character. Again, he may turn out virtuous even if he be a slayer of animals by birth or profession .” 122 Therefore, virtue does not altogether depend either on the birth or on the calling of a person.

The reason why one is bom in a family which has adopted a low profession" is of course summed up in the word karma . “Destiny is all powerful” says this hunter to Kausika. 4 ‘It is difficult to overcome the consequences of our past deeds. This is (i.e., his profession is due to) karma-evil, arising from sins committed in a former life .” 123 'Whatever is killed by one, moreover, is also killed by ita own karma too, the killer being only an “agent in conse-

116. Man. x, 106; also Yaj. iii, 42.

117. Maha. Vana. 205, 44.

118. ibid. 206, 11.

110. ibid. 106, 19.

120. ibid. 206, 21.

121. ibid. 206, 22-23.

122. ibid. 34.

123. ibid. 207, 2-3.

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quence of his fcarma ” 124 Each of us is under the influence of his karma; and each of us must always try to see in what way he can atone for his karma and extricate himself from an evil doom ahead . 125 There are so many ways of expiating this karma , viz., by gifts, truthfulness, service of the guru , faithfully following the

varna-dharma in which one is bom, virtuous conduct, freedom from pride, abandoning of idle talk and so forth . 126 “There can be said many things as regards the goodness or badness of our actions. But he who sticks to the dharma of his own varna acquires great glory .” 127

The ascetic Brahmana, to whom Dharma-Vyadha was expounding this varna-dharma, became soon convinced of the truth and wisdom of the latter’s interpretation, and finally admitted to Dharma-Vyadha that he was indeed no Sudra at all but a real Brahmana by virtue of his dutifulness. “For the Brahmana who is vain and haughty, who is sinful and evil-minded, and who indulges in degraded practices, is no better than a Sudra. The Sudra, on the other hand, who is endued with righteousness, self-control and truthfulness,” continues the ascetic, “is considered by me as a Brahmana. A person becomes a Brahmana by his own good deeds; and by his own evil karma, he meets with an evil and terrible doom .” 126

All this suggests a rather different meaning to the principles of the varna system as based on one’s karma . It means that if one is bom in a lower varna , then by following the dharma of his own varna in this birth, he may be able to be bom again in a higher varna in the next birth; and, one who is bom in a higher varna must live up to the duties and obligations of his varna if he does not want to be degraded in the next birth.

Later, in the same parva in the Mahabharata , we are explained the meaning of Dharma in an allegorical manner. Here Dharma comes in person to meet his foster-son Dharma-Raja or Yudhis-thira, the eldest of the five Pandava Princes. 12 \* He tells Yudhis-thira: “Fame, truth, self-control, purity, simplicity, modesty, steadiness, charity, asceticism, and Brahmacharya are my very

ibid. 207, 4. 125. ibid. 207, 20.

ibid. 207, 21-22.

ibid. 207. 39.

ibid 215, 13-15.

Vana. Adhyayas 311 to 313.

124.

120 .

127.

128.

129.

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in four different ways, differing in degrees of politeness as indicated by the terms ehi , agachchha, adrava and adhava respectively to be used for welcoming persons of the four different varnas. 2 '\* Different sizes of funeral cakes ( pinda ) were prescribed for different varnas 27

When reciting the Gayatri Mantra the three varnas were to start each with different word: the Brahmana with 'Bhuh', the Kshatriya with 'Bhuvah' and the Vaisya with 'Svah '. 28 Indeed, the Satapatha Brahmana says that the varnas are created from these words in their order, the Brahmana being created from the word Bhuh , the Kshatriya from Bhuvah and the Vaisya from Svah . 29 Further, the Brahmana is asked to use Palasa wood for sprinkling purposes at sacrifices, the Kshatriya to use Nyagrodha wood, and the Vaisya to use AJvattha wood . 30 According to the Aitareya Brahmana , the Brahmana varna must recite the Gayatri Mantra , the Kshatriyas the Trishmbh mantra, and the Vaisyas the Jagati mantra at the initiation rite . 31 According to the Taitiriya Brahmana, the Brahmana varna should perform their sacrifice during the spring, the Kshatriya varna during summer, and the Vaisyas during autumn . 32 Thus, a gradual increase in the distinction between the different varnas in terms of different rights and privileges is noticeable as we pass on from the Rigvedic literature to the Brahmanic literature, viz., in the Samhitas, the Brahman as, and the XJpanishads.

In this later period, the Sudra still held the position of a menial labourer or slave; and, he was still a non- Aryan. Even then, there was less restriction upon him; and, he was at times allowed the liberty of even taking part in sacrificial ceremonies . 33 Instead of the three varnas, mention is now usually made of the four varnas together, the Sudra also finding a place along with the three other varnas. The prayer goes, for instance: "Bestow splendour on our Brahmanas; bestow splendour on our Kshatriyas; bestow splendour

26. Satapatha Br. i, 1, 4, 12 ; (from Dutt : op. cit, pp. 85 if,).

27. Sat Br. xiii, 8, 3, 11, (from ibid.).

28. 6at. Br. ii, 1, 3, 4, (from ibid.).

29. 6at. Br. ii, 1-4, 11, ff. (Muir : Ori. Sansk . Texts , i, p. 17).

30. \$at. Br. v, 3, 2.. 11 ; (from Dutt : op. cit.)

31. Ait Br. i, 5, (from *ibid.*). 32. Taitt. Br. i, 1, (from *ibid.*).

33. 6at. Br. i, 1, 4, 11 (from *ibid.*).

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on our Vaisyas and Sudras; bestow splendour upon me .” 84 In the Satapatha Brahmana , a Sudra attends to a P itri-medha Yajna;™ the Chhandogya Upanishad relates a story about a Brahmana teaching the sacred knowledge to a Sudra, and accepting in return from him rich gifts and also his daughter . 36 Even in the account of the creation of the varnas, the Sudra finds a place equal to the other varnas in position. “He lauded with one ( ekwyd astuvata) – living beings were formed; .... He lauded with three, – the Brahmana was

created He lauded with fifteen, – the Kshatra was created.

.... He lauded with nineteen, – the Sudra and the Arya (Le. Vailya) were created .” 37 In another passage again, the four varnas are referred to as having sprung from the divine element of Agni (Fire) in each of the varnas; through the divine Brahmana a human Brahmana was created; through the divine Kshatriya a human Kshatriya sprang; through the divine Vaisya a human VaHya was originated; and through the divine Sudra a hu m a n Sudra was created . 38

Though the Sudra was now accepted as belonging to a fourth vama along with the three other varnas and though he was given some freedom with regard to attendance at sacrificial parties, he was not yet quite free from many of the old disabilities. Thus, he had for himself no right to perform a sacrifice like the three higher varnas.™ His duty continued to be, as in older times, to serve the other varnas . He might attend a religious ceremony only to wash the feet of persons of the other varnas , and that because his very origin was out of the feet of Praja-pati (Creator of Men) . 40 He had no God; and consequently he could not perform sacrifices . 41 He would not be even spoken to directly by any person who is engaged in performing important sacrificial rites. “Every one cannot obtain

34. Taitt. Sam. v, 7, 6, 4, (from *ibid.*).

35. Sat. Br. xiii, 8, 3, 11 (from *ibid.*).

36. Chhand. Up. iv, 2 (from *ibid.*).

37. Vajasaneya Samhi. adv, 28 fP. ( = Taittirlya Samhi. iv, 3, 10, 1) – Muir: Ori. Sansk . Texts, i, p. 18.

38. Sat. Br. xiv, 4, 2, 27 ( = Br, Up, i, 4, 11, ff.)– Muir : ibid.  
Vol. i, p. 19.

39. Sat. Br. iii, 1, 1, 10 and Panchavimsa Br. vi, 11 ; – from Dutt :  
op. cit., p. 104,

40. Tatt. Sam. vii, 1, 1 ; (from ibid,).

41. Fanch. Br. vi, 1, 11 ; (from ibid,).

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this, for the Gods do not associate with every man but an Arya, a Brahmana or a Kshatriya or a Vaisya; for, these can perform a sacrifice. Nor should one talk with every body except only with an Arya, a Brahmana or a Kshatriya or a Vaiiya; fbr, these can sacrifice. If any one has occasion to speak to a Sudra, let him say to another person; ‘tell this man so and so’. This is the rule for an initiated man ”. 42 Even the touch of a Sudra to articles like milk, meant for the use of a sacrifice, was prohibited . 43

There seem to be no restrictions during this period of the BrdhTnans and Samhitas as regards marriages between the Varnas, excepting perhaps the restriction upon marriage with a Sudra male or female by a member of another varna . There are not, however, many instances recorded specifically showing the absence of such restrictions; but that may be due to the fact that no particular attention was attracted by inter-uar?a marriages, as in all probability they must have been quite frequent and not exceptional. The Atharva Veda declares at one place that a Brahmana’s claim to marry a Vaisya girl must be given priority to the claims of a Vaisya youth . 44 Of course, cases are pointed out where marriage of a man of a higher varna with a Sudra woman was looked upon with disfavour. Kavasa AiluSa was expelled from a sacrifice because his mother was a dost, i.e. slave; but he was re-admitted after the Gods had shown him special favour . 45 Another man Vatsa, in order to prove himself as bom of Brahmana parents, had to walk through fire unharmed, before he was admitted to be present at a sacrifice . 4

Of the Upanishads, the Brihaddranyaka gives us an account of the origin of the varnas in this way: In the beginning there was Brahman only. But alone, he could not prosper well (na vyabhavat ) Therefore, he further created a form [or a pattern or type] ( ruyam ) with a view to welfare (freyo) , viz. the Kshatra; this consisted of the Gods Indra, Vanina, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mritya and

Isana . . . Still, however, Brahman found that it could not fare satisfactorily; therefore, it created the Vatiya- hood (viiam) in the form of the Gods Vasus, Rudras, Adityas, Vifve-devas and the Maruts. Even

42 Sat. Br. iii, 1, 1 ; (from ibid. p. 104).

43. Taitt. Br. iii, 2, 3 ; (ibid. p. 105).

44. Ath. Ved. v, 17, 9 ; (ibid. p. 109).

45. Ait. Br. ii, 19 ; Kaush. Br. xii, 1, 3 ; (ibid. p. 110).

46. Panch. Br, xiv, 6, 6 ; (ibidL).

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then, Brahman could not make good progress; so it created Sudra Varna in the form of the God Pushan. In spite of these creations, again, Brahman jdid not develop well; therefore, he still further created the form (rupam) of Dharma for welfare [of Brahman, or of human beings.]. The earthly varnas are, in the opinion of Brihad - dranyakopanishad, thus created out of these divine varnas . 47 This theory does not refer to any social gradation amongst the varnas. On the contrary, each varna , as also the dharma for them, were conceived as also created with a view to contributing to the social welfare. Regarding birth in a particular varna , the Chhandogya tells us that this depends upon the nature of our deeds in the former birth. Those who are of good conduct here, will attain good birth as Brahmanas or as Kshatriyas or as Vaisyas. But those who are of bad conduct here, will be born again as dogs, swines or out-castes . 48 Here, only the first three varnas are mentioned . 49 In all these views, however, there seems to be no reference to any idea of status or an idea of 'higher or lower' involved between the three varnas.

## II

( 1 )

There is a great deal of theorizing in the Epic and the Dharma - Sastra literature on the problem of the origin and development of varnas : There were no distinct castes or classes of men in the Krita Yuga , 50 according to the Mahabharata . 51 At another place, the sage Bhrigu says that only a few Brahmanas were first created by the

47. Brih. Up. i, 4, 11-15. Professor Ranade, in “ A Constructive Survey of XJpanishadic Philosophy ”, p. 60, observes in this connection :

/ “In this unorthodox theory, we have the origin of the earthly caste system on the pattern of a heavenly caste system almost in the manner in which the ectypes in Plato\*s Theory of Ideas are merely replicas of the archetypes.” 48. Chh5nd. Up. v, 10, 7.

49. In Chhand. viii, 14, also, only Br&hmapa, Rajan, and Vi&, are mentioned.

50. There are said to be four yugas (ages), Krita or Satya, also called the ‘golden age’ ; Treta ; Dvapara ; and Kali yuga t i.e. the present age, also called ‘iron age\*.

51. Maha. Vana. 149, 18 : <cf. also RamS, Uttar, xxx, 25-26) “eka-varnd mayd buddhya prajah srisht&h tathd prabhof ekavarnah . . .” and, H tdsam n&sti viiesho hi darSane lakshane' pi vd/ /” ; and Bhag. Pur5. ix, 14, 4 ; “efca eva para vedah . . . eko'gnir vania eva cha/ /”.

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great Brahman. 52 But later on, the four divisions of mankind – Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra developed. The complexion ( varnah ) of the Brahmanas was white (sita) , 63 that of Kshatriyas red ( lohita ), that of the Vaisyas yellow (pitakah), and that of the Sudras black ( asita ) – thus does the rishi Bhrigu explain his theory of the origin of the vamas to Bharadwaja. But Bharadwaja asks: If the various vamas had to be distinguished simply by means of the colour of their complexion, then surely this must have been found to be an impossible task! For there are endless varieties of men and colour! How could so many different varieties ( vividha ) be classed under four orders only? To this Bhrigu replies that there is no distinction between the different classes. 54 At first the whole world consisted of Brahmanas. Created equally by Brahman, men have, on account of their acts, been divided into various vamas. 54 The theory goes on to explain how the four vamas and other castes (jdtayah) arose out of the one original class of Dvijas (twice-born) . Those who found excessive pleasure in enjoyment, became possessed of the attributes of harshness and anger; endowed with courage, and unmindful of their own dharma , (tyakta-sva-dharmah) , those Dvijas possessing the quality of redness (raktdngah) , 55 became Kshatriyas. Those again, who, unmindful of the duties laid down for them, became endued with both the qualities of Redness and Darkness (pitah) 56 and followed the occupations of cattle-breeding



and agriculture, became Vaisyas. Those Dvijas, again, who were given to untruth and injuring other creatures, possessed of cupidity ( lubdhah ), who indiscriminately followed all sorts of occupations for their maintenance ( sarva-karrrio' pa-pvinah ) , who had no purity of behaviour (saucha-paribhrashtah) , and who thus nursed within them the quality of Darkness ( krishnah ) 57 became Sudras. Thus

52. See Maha. 6anti. 188, 1-17, for the views of Bhrigu given here,

53. NUKantha comments : “varnah sdtvikam rajasam tdmam misram cheti svachchhatvadismydt gwiavrittam varna-sadbena uchyate/” Thus, “Sitah = sattva-gunah ; lohita = rajo-gunah ; pitakah == rajas-tamo-vydrtisrah ; asitah = tamo-gunah” 54. ibid. 188, 10 :

Na visesho\*sti varnanam sarvam brahmam idam jagat/  
brahmana purva-srishtam hi karmabhir varnatdm gatam/ /

55. ‘raktdngah = rajo-guna-mayah 9 – Nilakaiitha.

58. ‘pitah– rajas-tamo-mayah \* – Nllaka^tha. However the word

pitah literally means ‘yellow’.

57, ‘krishnah\* – kevala-tamo-mayah – NUaka^tha.

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“divided by these occupations, the Dvijas, (who were, in the first instance, all Brahmanas) due to falling away from the duties of their own order, became members of the other three varnas. None o^them, therefore, is prohibited from carrying out all the activities of dharmas and yajna \$” &8 Further, those who, through their ignorance, fell away from their prescribed duties and led a loose life ( svachchandachdracheshntah ) , ended in reducing themselves to the various lower castes (jatayah), viz. the Piiachas (feinds), the Raksasas (goblins) , the Pretas (the evil-spirited) , and the various mlechchha (barbarian or outcast) jatis (castes ). 59

The theory of the origin of the varnas from the various parts of the Creator’s body also finds a place in the Mahabharata. Thus, the Brahmana is said to have originated from the mouth of the Brahman (the Creator), the Kshatriya from his arms, the Vailya from his two thighs, and the Sudra from his feet . 60 The Brahmana was created to preserve the Vedas and the other scriptures, the Kshatriya for ruling the earth, holding the rod of punishment and

protecting all other creatures, the Vaisya for supporting the two other orders and himself by cultivation and trade, and the Sudra to serve the three orders as a servant . 61

But theorizing about the origin and the distinction between the four varnas does not end with these views only. King Janaka asks a pertinent question to the sage Parasara on this subject: The whole of mankind has sprung from Brahman. Now, it is a law of nature, and the Srutis too say the same, that the offsprings share in common the nature of that from which they are created. 'Therefore, all the men on earth must have been of one varna when they were created! Whence, then, did the distinction start? Paraiara replies thus: It is true that the offsprings begotten by one "is none else than the begetter himself"; but, if "the soil and the seed are inferior, the offspring born of these will be inferior". Now, proceeds the sage, though mankind originated from the Great Brahman himself, all did not spring from the same part of his body; the Brahmanas sprang from his mouth, the Kshatriyas from his arms,

58. *ibid*, ganti. 188, 10-14:

ityetaih karmahhir vyastd dpij& vanidntaram gatdh/  
dharmo yajna-kriya tesham nityam na pratishiddhyate/ /

59. *ibid*. Santi. 188, 17-18. 60. *ibid*, fifiati 72, 4-5

61. *ibid*. 72, 6-8.

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the Vaisyas from his thigh and the Sudra from his feet. But it is to be remembered again that originally only these four varnas were created; all other classes besides these "are said to have originated from an intermixture of these" ( samkarajdh smritah ) . In this manner, for instance, were the sub-sections in the Kshatriya varna created . 62 Parasara then gives a list of fourteen such sub-classes like the stenas (robbers) , sutas (charioteers) , nishadas (hunters, fishermen) , svapdkas (chndndlas) and others.

Finally, there is the theory, advanced by the great Bhishma himself as to the origin of several castes apart from the four varnas. The theory, in short, is this: Originally Praja-pati (the Lord of Men) created the four varnas only ( chdtur-vamyam cha kevalam) and laid down their respective duties (chatur-vamyasya karmam) for the sake of Yajna . 68 However, a person from any of these

varnas was allowed to marry women from his own varna, and from the varnas below his own. Now, the offspring begotten of a wife of his own varna and of a wife from a varna immediately below his own belong to their father's varna; but the offspring begotten of a wife remoter than one varna below his own should belong to the varna of his mother. Thus, for instance, a Brahmana may marry wives from all the four varnas ; the sons from his Brahmana and Kshatriya wives would be Brahmanas like their father, while his sons of his Vaisya wife or wives would be Vaisya, and those of his Sudra wife or wives would be Sudra. In this way, again, a Vaisya's son from either a Vaisya or Sudra wife would be a Vaisya like his father. So far it is all without much complexity; but even this does not explain the rise of more than four castes. For the offspring born in any of the ways so far enumerated would find a place either in his father's varna or in his mother's varna . To explain the existence of the various other castes, Bhishma advances the other part of his theory: It is when a man cohabits with a woman of higher varna than his own that the offspring so born is regarded as being outside the pale of the four varnas\*\* Such a son is the object of censure from the four principal varnas .<sup>5</sup> Sin lies therefore, in a woman's marrying a man of a varna lower than

62. «Śanti. 297, 2-9.

63, Maha. Anu. 48, 3. 64. Ami. 48, 4-28.

65, ibid. 48, 9 : i<sup>ch</sup>&tur-varnya-vigrahitam”.

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her own, not in a man's marrying a woman of a lower varna. So, Bhishma explains, by permutations and combinations of marriages of the former type, the several castes have come into existence. 68

( 2 )

The theory that the four varnas proceeded from the limbs of the Creator is also held by Manu-Smriti 67 And, in order to protect this whole universe ( sarvasya ), differential duties and occupations have been assigned to the different varnas ( prithak-karmani ) by him. 68 Manu then goes on to eulogise the Brahmana varna as the supreme creation of God. 69 He further positively asserts that the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra are the only varnas in existence; there is no fifth varna ; and with this, Yajnavalkya, Bau-

dhayana and Vasishtha also agree. 70

Manu's theory of the origin of mixed castes is, in certain respects, different from that of the Mahabharata. Sons begotten by twice-born men (dvijas, i.e. Brahmanas, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas) of wives from the immediate lower class belong no doubt to the varna of their fathers respectively but they are censured on account of the fault inherent in their mothers (matri-dosha) n. Such is the traditional (sanatana) law (vidhi) applicable to children of a wife from a varna only one degree lower than her husband's 72. The real 'mixture' of varnas (varnas-samkara) therefore arises with offsprings born of a woman two or three degrees lower. Thus the son born of a Brahmana father and a Vaiya mother would be called an Ambashtha; that born of a Brahmana father and a Sudra mother would be called Nishada, and so on. 73 The mixture of varnas takes place in other ways also. Of a Kshatriya father and Brahmana mother spring issues belonging to the Suta caste; children born of a Vaishya father and Kshatriya mother or a Brahmana

66. Anu. 48, 4-29.

67. Man. i, 31.

68. Man. i, 87.

69. ibid. 92-96.

70. Man. x, 4; also Yaj. i, 10; BatL i. 16, 1; and Vas. ii 1-2.

71. Man. x, 6; Such children are apasadas (base-born)— x, 10

72. Man, x, 7.

73. Man. x, 11-13; See also Yaj. i, 10; Vis. xvi 4-6.

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himself. Be sure that absence of cruelty, impartiality, peacefulness, restraint, purity and want of pride are the so many avenues of attaining to me." 130

In Mahesvara's opinion, also, a person of lower varna may attain the status of a higher varna in the next birth by following his own dharma in this birth. 181 The person who does not follow his

own dharma will be bom again in a lower varna. Thus, good (i.e. relative to one^ varna) deeds may succeed in securing higher vama for one, but not in this life, according to this theory. The duties which befall one in this life are due to one's past deeds; therefore they must be carried out and also atoned for by discharging the present dharmas in a just manner, if a better life is desired in the next birth. This means a higher varna is attainable through an evolution of births through which the individual attains higher and higher merit by dint of his pursuit of dharma. However, we shall revert to MaheSvara's opinion again below. 132

( 2 )

But there is another view also in the Mahabharata itself, expressed in very clear and unmistakable terms by King Yudhishtira, – who was also known as 'Dharma-Raja' , because he was known to abide by Dharma in all his conduct, – that the varna of the person is to be judged and assigned by what he does here and now, and not just with reference to the family in which he may have been bom. Bhlmasena, the second of the Pandava brothers and a man possessing exceptionally great physical strength, was caught by a Python, who was no other than the Pandavas' own ancestor, King Nahusha, fallen into the species of serpents because of his sin of highly insolent behaviour towards the rishis who were made to draw his chariot, one of whom pronounced a curse on him that he would be bom as a serpent; the Python would not release Bhlmasena until correct answers were given to his queries which Bhlmasena, who had entire confidence in his physical strength only, was unable to answer! So, Yudhishtira was asked the same questions:

130. *ibid.* 313, 7-8.

131. *Anu.* 143, 1-47.

132. See p. 310 below.

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"Tell me", the Python asked, "Who is a Brahmana?" "He in whom are noticeable truthfulness, charity, forgiveness, good character, mercy, ascetic tendencies, and compassion is regarded by the authorities ( smritak ) as a Brahmana," replied Yudhishtira. 133 But,

retorted the Python, these traits may be found even in a Sudra! 134  
 To this Yudhishtira replies: "The Sudra in whom these traits  
 ilakJma) are found is no Sudra (but a Brahmana) , and the Brah-  
 mana in whom these are lacking is no Brahmana (but a Sudra) , lw  
 It is regarded by the authorities that one in whom the characteristic  
 mode of life (vrittam) of a Brahmana is seen is a Brahmana; one in  
 whom it is not to be found should be assigned to Sudra vama" 15Q  
 "If, however, a Brahmana is to be recognized by his mode of life",  
 argues the Python, "then the distinction of caste {jatih) is useless  
 so long as a man's activity does not correspond to the mode of life  
 of his varna !" 137 Yudhishtira replies: "In my opinion, it is very  
 difficult to ascertain the caste ( jati ) of a man owing to the inter-  
 mixture ( samkara ) of all vamas. Men of all varnas are begetting  
 children of women of all varnas. 1 \*\* Besides, (overt manifestations  
 like) speech, cohabitation, birth and death are the same for men  
 of all the vamas 139 The proof of this difficulty in ascertaining  
 one's varna is also found in such utterances of the rishis as, "what-  
 ever varna we may belong to, we celebrate the sacrifice"! It is  
 therefore that those who have grasped the essentials (tattva -  
 darHnah) [of dharma ] have known that character (sila) is the

133. satyam danam kshama silam anriSamsyam tapo ghrina/  
 drisyante yatra nagendra sa brahmana iti smritah// Vana. 180,  
 21 .

134. ibid. 23.

135. iudre tu ya\$ bhavel-lakshma dvije tach~cha na vidyate/

na vai sudro bhavet chhudro brdhmano na cha brdhmanah/ /  
 ibid. 25.

136. yatraitaUlakshyate Sarpa vrittam sa brahma-nah smritah {  
 yatraitan-na bhavet Sarpa tarn fudram iti nirdiit// ibid. 26-

137. yadi te vrittato rdjan brahmatah prasamikshitah /  
 vritha jatis tadd t yushman kritir ydvan-na vidyate// ibid. 30.

138. jdtir atra Maha-Sarpa manushyatve mahd-mate/  
 samkardt sarva-varndnam dushparikshyeti me matih// ibid. 31.

139.. same sarvdsvapatydni janayanti sadd narah/  
 vdn-maithunam atha janma maranam cha samam nrinam//  
 ibid. 32.

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principal desirable thing .” 140

On this theory, further, every person, at birth, is no better than iudra ; his character-traits as expressed in his behaviour later show him to belong to the Brahmana (or any other) varna. “The post-natal rituals immediately on birth ( jata-karma ) are performed for every male prior to the severance of the naval chord; and on that occasion, his mother is, as it were, his Savitri, and the father his Achdrya. 1 \* 1 But until his initiation into the Vedas (i.e. until the initiation ceremony – see ch. iv) is gone through, every man is just like a Sudra. In view of the difference of opinion on this point, Manu, the Self-Created, himself has laid down that if, having gone through the various samskdras the members of the varnas do not observe their respective modes of behaviour (vrittam), then those members of intermixture of varnas (who may be adhering to their respective modes) should be considered as superior to the former . 142 “As I have already said,” repeats Yudhishthira again, “him in whom is found the mode of life in line with the various samskdras ( samskritam vrittam) – him I would consider to be a Brahmana .” 143 The Python – i.e. King Nahusha – was so pleased with these answers that he complimented Yudhishthira as “a man who knows what ought to be known” ( viditavedyah) u 4 , and released his brother.

This incident is also supposed to have meant as a lesson of humility for Bhimasena, who had become too vain about his own physical strength, but found that all his physical might and vitality came to nought and he realized that ultimately it is only the strength of character ( Jila ) of a man that is the most potent force in this world.

140. idam drsham pramaTiam cha ye yajdmaha ityapi /  
tasmdch-chhllam pradhaneshfam vidur ye tattva-darsinah/ /

ibid. 33

141. pran-nab hi-varadhanat pumso jata-karma vidhiyate I  
tatrasya mdtd savitri pita tvdcharya uchyate// ibid 34.

142. tdvach-chhudra-samo hyesha ydvad vedam na jayate /  
tasminnevam mati-dvaidhe manuh svdyambhuvo'bravit/ /  
krita-krityah punar- varna yadi vrittam na vidyate /  
samskdras tvatra nagendrabalavdn prasamxkshitah//  
ibid. 35-36.

143. tatredanim maha-sarpa samskritam vrittam ishyate/

tarn brahmay&m aham purvam uktavan bhuja-gottama/ /  
ibid. 37. 144. ibid. 38.

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In the Bhavishya-Maha-Purana we are told that there can be no such thing as jdti-distinction amongst human beings, since they are all sons of One Father; and just as the udumbara 145 tree grows numerous fruit at the bottom, in the middle and at the end and yet all of them are similar in colour, shape, touch and taste (or juice), similarly men belong to one jdti. And, in the Bhagavata-Purana also we are reminded of the fact that varna is to be known and designated by the deeds of a person rather than his birth. Persons who have grasped the essential meaning of the Vedas (Veda-drig) have declared that the dharma of men which is by and large determined (vihitah) on the basis of native temperaments or tendencies (svabhava) in accordance with the times (yuga) is conducive to the welfare of men, in this world as well as hereafter. 147 A person carrying out his karmas and following the occupation in accordance with his svabhava will gradually attain the state of quality-less-ness (nirgunata) by exhausting or destroying the karmas born of his svabhava. 148 Just as a field that is being continually tilled loses all capacity of fertility and is unable to yield corn and even destroys the seed sown in it, so does our mind which is the source of all desires become satiated by an over-indulgence in them; – fire may be extinguished by a continuous pouring of clarified butter, though it flashes forth if the butter is poured in drops. 140 If the distinctive

145. The Indian fig tree. It has a long life which may extend to hundreds of years. Also, its branches spread out over a very large area so that hundreds of people could sit under its shade at a time.

146. Bhavishyamahadpurana t Brahma-parva, 42, 45-46 ;  
chatvara ekasya pituh sutdi cha teshdm sutanam khalu jatir  
eka / evam prajanam hi pitaika eva pitraikabhavan na cha  
jdtibhedah// phalan yatho\* dwnbara-vriksha-jatah yathagra -  
madhyanta-bhavani yanti/ varna-kriti-sparsa-rasaih samani

tathaikato jatir atiprachintya { /

147. Bhag. Pura. VII. xi, 31 :



prayah svabhdva-vihito nrindm dharmo yuge yuge J  
veda-drighbhih smrito rdjan pretya cheha cha sarma-krit/ /

148. ibid. 32 : vrittyd svabhava-kritaya vartamdna svakarmakrit/  
hitvd svabhdva-jam karma sanair nir-gunatam iyat/ /

149. ibid. 33-34:

upyamanam muhuh kshetram svayam rtir-vtryatam iydt/  
na kalpate punah sutyd uptam bijam cha naJyati/ /  
evam kmddayam chittam kmdndm ati-sevayd/  
virajyeta yathd rdjanndgnivat kama-bindubhih/ /

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characteristics or signs of conduct ( lakshanam ) explained as indicative of the varna of a man be (absent in one person and) found in another, then call that person by the varna as denoted by these characteristics (lakshana) , 150 and not by that of his birth. These “lakshanas” are: Peaceful (or quiet) nature, self-restraint, austerity, purity, contentment, forgiveness, uprightness, knowledge, kindness, firm devotion to God, and truthfulness – these are the characteristic traits of a Brahmana . 151 Bravery, valour, courage, fire (tejaa), charity, self-control, forgiveness, friendliness towards Brahmanas, graciousness and (inclination to give) protection (to others), are the characteristic traits of a Kshatriya . 152 Devotion to God, to guru and to the Firm (Principle? or to God Vishnu?), sustenance of the three classes, belief in God, industry, and dexterity (or skillfulness or shrewdness) – are the characteristic traits of a Vaisya . 155 Humility, purity, unaffected service to masters, sacrificing without mantras , absence of tendency to steal, truthfulness and preservation of the cattle and the Brahmanas – are the characteristic traits of a Sudra . 154

The Sukra-Niti gives us similar bases of the four varnas. Thus, “Not by birth are the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra and Mlechchha 155 differentiated, but by their respective qualities and deeds .” 156 And further, in the description of the dharmas of different varnas, the Sukra-Niti classifies men in accordance with

150. ibid. 35:

yasya yal lakshanam proktam pumso varndbhivyanjakam /

yad anyatrapi drisyeta tat tenaiva vi-nirdiset { /

151. *ibid.* 21 :

samo damas tapas saucham santoshah kshantir arjavam /  
jnanam dayd\*chyutatmatvam satyam cha brahma-lakshanam/ /

152. *ibid.* 22:

iauryam viryam dhritis tejas tydga atma-jayah kshama/  
brahmanyatd prasadas cha rakshd cha kshatra-lakshanam/ /

153. *ibid.* 23 :\*

dev a-gurv achy ute bhaktis trivarga-pariposhanam/  
dstikyam udyamo nityam naipunam vaisya-lakshanam/ /

154. *ibid.* 24:

iudrasya samnatih saucham seva svaminyamayayd/  
a-mantra-yajno hyasteyam satyam go-vipra-rakshana™'/ /

155. A fifth “varna” is here added. Mlechchha = barbarian outcast

156. Sukra. i, 75-76.

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what they do, and not their duties in accordance with their prede-  
termined position by the accident of birth. Thus, one who can  
protect men, who is valorous, is a Kshatriya for the Sukra-NitL  
And similarly about the other varnas . 157

We have already referred to Mahesvara’s view of how good  
deeds would lead to higher varna , by evolution, in the next birth.  
But during the course of the same discussion on varna , Mahesvara  
has also opined that a all the Brahmanas in this world could be really  
called Brahmanas only on the merit of their conduct or mode of liv-  
ing (vrittam); and, a Sudra, if he is of good conduct, is considered  
to have attained to Brahmanahood .” 158 Even a Sudra, we are told,  
who has purified his soul by pure deeds and who has controlled all  
his senses, deserves to be waited upon and served with the respect  
due to a Brahmana – this is what is said by Brahma himself ; 159 and  
his own opinion also, says Mahesvara, is the same . 160 Neither birth,  
nor samskara , nor learning, nor being bom in a particular family

could be considered as cogent grounds for conferring a varna of the dvija kind (i.e. one of the first three varnas ) upon a person; his mode of behaviour {vritti) only could be the basis of conferring such dignity upon him . 161

In the Mahabharata, once more, we find Rishi Bhrigu lecturing on varna-dharma to Bharadvaja; and his view is noteworthy here in that he explicitly bases the varnas on the dharmas , and not the dharmas on the varnas . Thus for Bhrigu, he who has been sanctified ( samskritah ) by jatakarma and other samskaras, who is pure in conduct, who is devoted to the Vedic study, and who is always mindful of his own modes of behaviour (nitya-vrati) and of truth, –

157. *ibid*, i, 77-78.

158. Mah§. Anu 143, 51 :

"sarvo'yam brahmano loke vrittina tu vidhiyate/  
vritte sthitas tu sudro'pi brdhmanatvam niyachchhati/ f'

159. *ibid*. 143, 48 :

"karmabhih suchibhir dev x hiddhdtmd vijitendriyah /  
sudro f pi dvijavat sevya iti brahma'bravit svayam/ /"

16Q. *ibid*. 143, 49 :

u svabhavah karma c ha subham yatra sudre'pi tishthatif  
vi&ishtah sa dvijdter vai vijneya iti me matih//'\

161. *ibid*. 143, 60 :

iC na yonir ndpi samskdro na srutam na cha santatih /  
kdrwadni dvijatvasya vrittdvev a tu kdranam !P\

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he with whom truth, charity, abstention from malice or injury to others ( a~drohah ), mercy, modesty ( trapa ), benevolence, and penance are associated – such a person is called a Brahmana . 162 He who follows the duties proper for a Kshatriya, studies the Vedas, makes gifts, and captures wealth, is called a Kshatriya . 363 He who tends cattle, is engaged in agriculture and the means of acquiring riches, who is pure in conduct and attends to the study of the Vedas is called a Vaisya . 164 Lastly, "one who accepts any sort of food

indiscr im i n ately (sarva-bhaksha-ratih) , who is prepared to do any work (sarva-karma-karah) , who does not study the Vedas, and whose conduct is generally indiscriminate (an-achara) and impure (a-hlchih) 165 is a Sudra . Bhrigu further adds: If those characteristics as described so far of a Sudra are not to be seen in a so-called Sudra, and those characteristics described regarding a Brahmana are not observable in a so-called Brahmana then, such a Sudra is no Sudra, and such a Brahmana too no Brahmana at all . 166 This last, is a clear declaration to the effect that a man's varna has to be measured by his deeds and mode of behaviour, and not merely by his descent or birth.

The Sage Paras ara too gives similar criteria for the basis of varna as Bhngu has given above, when he advises King Janaka on the vama. "Brahmanas learned in the Vedas", says he, "regard a virtuous Sudra as a model of a Brahmana himself. I, however, regard such a Sudra as the effulgent Vishnu of the universe, the foremost one in all the worlds ." 167 Members of the lower vama (nihnrah) may, with the intention and purpose of raising their own souls to higher levels ('ud-didhishavah) , follow the conduct of the higher varnas, though without mantras. 1 \*\* To the question of Janaka, whether it is birth (jdti) or the deed (karma) which defiles or taints ( dushayati ) man, Paras ara answers, that in a sense, both

162. Sinti. 189, 2-4. 163. ibid. 189, 5.

164. ibid. 189, 6. 165. ibid. 189, 7.

166. ibid. 189, 8.

167. Santi. 297, 28 :

"vaidehakam sudram udaharanti dvija maharaja kruto'pa,  
pannah/

aham hi paJydmi narendra devam visvasya vishium jagatah

pradanam/\*\*

168. Santi. 297, 29-30.

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may equally defile or taint man . 169 However, there is a difference (visesham) between the two: The man who is tainted owing to birth in a low family but does not commit low acts (ptfpam), is not really defiled personally by the taint of mere low birth; on the other hand, the man who, though bom in a high family (jaty\* pradhnam), yet perpetrates censurable (dhik-kritam) deeds, is tainted by such deeds . 170 Of the two, birth and deed, therefore, it is by and large the deeds that defile man . 171

There are various instances recorded of the vam a of persons being known by their deeds as against the vama of the family in which they were born:

The story of Visvamitra, a Kshatriya, becoming a Brahmana by dint of his own efforts ( balat ), is recorded both in the Mahabharata 172 and in the Rdmdyana . 173 It has been suggested that the great difficulties which Visvamitra had to undergo in order to attain the position of a Brahmana are indicative of the fact that such a change of vama was not countenanced with much favour by the society and by the privileged class of Brahmanas themselves. But, if we take into consideration the division of vama as based on the dominance of one or the other natural psychological tendencies called sattva, rajas and tamos, the difficulties which Visvamitra had to undergo will have to be interpreted and assessed in psychological terms rather than in terms of the social colour and prejudice which is usually given to them 174 It is indeed not an easy task to change one's innate tendencies, inclinations and aptitudes. The actual barriers described as being against Visvamitra's change were not social but psychological, since he had to undergo severe mental discipline and training in order to transform his rajas nature into a life of sdttvika qualities. It, was not merely the question of change of functions or occupations, nor even of undergoing rigorous physical hardship and discipline; it was rather a problem of fundamental spiritual transformation, of a change of heart. And, this view is further confirmed by the nature of the several 'tests'

169. *ibid.* 297, 31-32 – (ubhayam dosha-karakam ) .

170. *ibid.* 297, 32-34. 171. *ibid.* 297, 34.

172. *Adi.* 71, 79. 173. *BSlakanda*, Ivii, ff.

174. The implications of these qualities are discussed below, in section IV.

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which Visvamitra had to undergo in order to prove his Brahmanahood.

The story of Parasurama, a Brahmana, who became a Kshatriya by profession is too well known to be related here . 175 There are other notabilities in the Mahabharata, who were Brahmanas by birth but were Kshatriyas by deeds, viz., Dronacharya, Kripacharya and Ashvatthaman . All these three attained the position of Commanders-in-Chief in the Kaurava army. Two Kshatriya princes, Devapi and Sindhudvlpā attained Brahmanahood . 176 So also, prince Vitahavya was able to attain Brahmanahood . 177 Indra, again, though son of a Brahmana by birth, became a Kshatriya due to his deeds (karmana) , 178

In the Bhṛgavata Purāṇa many other instances of change of varṇa are recorded: Gargya, the son of a Kshatriya attained Brahmanahood . 179 Duritakshaya, Pushkararuni, Traiyyaruni and Kavi became Brahmanas likewise . 180 So again, King Saryati rose to the eminence of a great Brahmana (brahmishtha) and officiated as a sacrificial priest . 181 And Nabhaga, another Kshatriya Prince became Vaisya owing to his deeds (earmark) . 182 Prishadhra, a Kshatriya prince, became a Sudra . 183 Not only individuals, but whole families and communities are said to have attained a change of varṇa in this manner. Thus in the same Purāṇa, a whole clan or group of people (gotra) known by the name Maudgalya is recorded to have attained Brahmanahood, though it descended from one Mudgala who was a Kshatriya . 184 Then, out of the hundred sons of King Bishabha-deva, eighty-one became Brahmanas. And, a whole community of Brahmanas is said to have descended (brahmakulam jātam) from a Kshatriya named Dhṛishṭa. The Padma-Purāṇa tells us that Vyasa and Vaibhandaka, though both of very low origin (asat-kṣhetra-kula) , were respected and honoured as dvijatis; and so was Vasishtha who was the son of a cour-

175. MahS. Va na, 115. 176. Maha. Salya. 40.

177. Maha. Anu. 30. 178. Maha. Santi. 22, 11.

170. Bhag. Pu. ix, xxi, 19.

180. ibid, ix, xxi, 20.

181. ibid, ix, iiL

182. ibid, ix, ii.

183. ibid, ix, ii.

184. *ibid*, ix, xxi, 33.

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tesan (veJya-putrah) 185 And, indeed, the names of Vyasa (considered to be the author of the Mahabharata ) and Vasishtha have been hallowed by the Hindu tradition as the most revered ones for the Hindu.

There are several other instances recorded of change of varna , for instance, in the Matsya Purana 186 ~ the Vdyu Parana, 187 and in the HarivamJa. 168 ,

In the Mahabharata, there are instances recorded of inter-marriages also between the varnas. Kang Santanu married Satya-vatl, who was apparently the daughter of a Sudra. King Dush-manta (or Dushyanta) married Sakuntala, supposed to be the daughter of rishi Kanva 189 who was a Brahmana, And, King Yayati married DevayanI, the daughter of a Brahmana priest Sukracharya. 100 Rishi Chyavana married princess Sukanya. 191 And two rishis, apparently Brahman as, called Narada and Parvata have a quarrel over the daughter of a Kshatriya King Srinjaya whom both of them sought to marry. 192 Such instances of inter-marriages are many in the Mahabharata, and once more indicate that the varwa-barriers were not regarded as insurmountable even in regard to such an important question as marriage.

## IV

Of all the ideologies of the Hindu thinkers concerning social organization on the varna basis (varna-vyavastha) , the statement made in the Bhagavad-Gita is perhaps the most outstanding and specific; we shall therefore review this theory of the Gita here. Tfie theory classifies society into four varnas (chdtur-varnyam) in terms of the dominant gun as, that is to say, in accordance with one

185. Padma-Pura. xlvii, 47-48 :

asat-kshetra-Tcule pujyau Vy5sa~Vaibhdn<}akau tatha/  
kshatriyaridm kule jdto Visvdmitro'sti tat-samah//

« . .veiya-putro Vasishpiaai cha anye siddhd dvijatayah//

186. Matsya-R, 1, 88. 187. Vayu-Pura. xcix, 278 ; Ivii, 121.

188. Hari. xxvii, 1488 ; xxxvii, 1773.

189. MahS. Adi 71.

190. ibid. 81.

191. ibid. Yana. 122.

192. ibid. Drcsgta, 55.

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or the other of the synthetic moulds arising out of different psychic tendencies and energies innate in the biological and psychological make-up of man. In this % sense, the gunas may be said to be the psycho-moral bases of the varna organization. Before we proceed further in analyzing the varnas as social classes, therefore, let us here try to envisage the gu«a-theory as propounded by the Gita:

The whole karma-kdnda or “the world of activities” is said to be a result of the complex intermingling of the three gunas , viz., sattva, rajas and tamos , 198 – roughly, Goodness (or Light or Truth), Passion, and Dullness (or Darkness or Ignorance) respectively, according to Sri Krishna in the Gita. He also says: “The whole world does not recognise Me, since they are deluded by the effects produced by these gunas” 19 \* The world of human beings is but a part of the whole creation, and, as such, it is also fettered by these three gunas 196 Now, of the gunas , sattva is characterised by purity (nirmalatva) ; consequently, it is of an enlightening and healthy nature; and, it binds one by an attachment to ease (or peacefulness) and to knowledge . 1 ^ 6 Rajas is in essence passion; it is the source of yearnings and clingings; and it fetters the embodied one by attachment to activity . 197 Tamas is bom of ignorance; it is the source of delusion of all embodied beings, binding them by the

193. GI. ii, 45 :

“traigunya-vishaya vedd nis-traigunyo bhavarjuna/”

ibid. vii. 12 :

“ye chaiva sattvika bhava rajas as tdmads cha ye/  
matta eveti tan viddhi na tvaham teshu te mayi/f



194. *ibid*, vii, 13 :

“tribhir guna-mayair bhavair ebhih sarvam idem jagat /  
mohitam ndbhijanati mam ebhyah param avyayam// >J .

195. *ibid*, xiv, 5 :

“sattvam rajas tama iti gundh prakriti-sambhavah /  
nibadhnantimahdbaho dehe dehinam avyayam //” .

196. *ibid*, xiv, 6 :

“tatra sattvam nirmalatvdt prakasakam anamayam/  
sukha-samgena badhnati jndna-samgena chanagha//”.

197. *ibid*, xiv, 7 :

“rajo ragdtmakam viddhi trishnd-samga-samudbhavam/  
tan nibadhnati kaunteya karma-samgena-dehinam/ /” \*

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qualities of carelessness, sloth and sleep . 198 Sattva, then, bids for a life of ease and peacefulness, rajas for restless activity, and tamas, veiling right perception, leads to carelessness (or negligence) . m By overpowering rajas and tamas, sattva prevails; by overpowering sattva and tamas, rajas predominates; while tamas dominates in man by overpowering sattva and rajas . 200 The sattva quality can be known to have been fully developed in a man when the light of knowledge shines in his body, through all its ‘gates\* (i.e., sense-organs) ; 201 that is to say, all his activities show him to be a man with understanding. On the other hand, a man in whom rajas has waxed full shows signs of greed, undertakes (too much) activity and expresses restlessness and longings . 202 And tamas , when it gets the upper hand in an individual, manifests itself in obscurity, stagnation (inactivity), carelessness and delusion . 205

Sri Krishna tells us further about the effects of the influence of the gunas upon the individual; The person who dies with the mttva~guna fully developed in him will attain the pure worlds of the most exalted who know the highest . 204 If, however, he dies with the rajas quality developed in him, he will be bom again

198. *ibid*, xiv, 8 ;

“*tamas tvajndnajam viddhi mohanam sarva-dehinam/  
pramddalasya-nidrabhis tan nibadhndti bharata//*”.

199. *ibid*, xiv, 9 :

“ *sattvam sukhe sanjayati rajah karmani bharata/  
jndnam dvuritya tu tamah pramdde sanjayatyuta//*”.

200. *ibid*, xiv, 10 ;

“*rajas tamas chabhibhuya sattvam bhavati bharata /  
rajah sattvam tamas chaiva tamah sattvam rajas tathd//*”

201. *ibid*, xiv, 11 :

“*sarva-dvareshu dehe'smin prakdia npajdyate/  
jndnam yadd tadd vidydd vivriddham sattvam ityuta f //*”.

202. *ibid* xiv, 12 : x

“*lobhah pravrittir drambhah karmandm a-iamah sprihd /  
rajasyetdni jayante vivriddhe bharatarshabha/ //*”.

203. *ibid*, xiv, 13:

“*aprakaio'pravrittis cha pramddo moha eva cha /  
tamasyetdni jayante vivriddhe kuru-nandana/ f*”.

204. *ibid*, xiv, 14:

“*yadd sattva pravriddhe tu pralayam ydti deha-bhrit/  
tadottamaviddm lokdn amaldn pratipadyate/ //*”.

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amongst those that are bound down to karma . 205 And, if he dies full of *tamos* , then he would be bom amongst the most deluded.\* 0 \*  
The fruit of good deeds', it is said, is *sattvika* and pure; of actions full of *rajas* , the fruit or end is misery; and, the result of actions full of *tamas* is ignorance. 207 From *sattva*, again, arises knowledge, from *rajas* arises greed, and from *tamas* only carelessness, delusion and ignorance can spring . 208

Now, when a person is able to realise that the (true) agent of actions is not himself but the interplay of the gunas within him, and he also fathoms That which is beyond the gunas , then, says the Lord, is he able to attain to His Being . 209 When the soul of such a person rises above the three gunas which spring from the body, he enjoys immortality and becomes free from birth, death, age and sorrow . 230 Sri Krishna further describes the characteristics (lingo) , the ways of life (dchdra) and the manner of overcoming the gunas of such an individual who has transcended the gunas ( gundtita ) : Such a man hates not enlightenment, activity or delusion, – i.e., from the context, sattva , rajas and tamas, – when they arise, nor longs for them when they have ceased their operations: he is, in fact, unconcerned, undisturbed by the gunas, remains unshaken, unperturbed, knowing that the gunas do and must but act according to their natures; for him, happiness and misery are alike; he abides in himself, i.e., is self-contained and content with what he is and has; for him a clod of earth, a stone and gold are all alike; to such a man, the pleasant and the unpleasant, praise and censure,

305. ibid, xiv, 15 :

u rajasi pralayam gatvd karma-sangishu jdyate/  
tathd pralxnas tamasi muQha-yonishu jdyate/ /”

206. ibid. 207. ibid, xiv, 16 :

<l karmanah sukritasyahuh sdtvikam nirmalam phalam/  
rajasas tu phalam dukkham ajndnam tamas ah phalam/ /”.

208. ibid, xiv, 17 :

“sattvat sanjdyate jndnam rajaso lobha eva cha/  
pramada-mohau tamaso bhavato\* jndnam eva cha//\*\

209. ibid. xiv. 19 :

“ndnyam gunebhyah kartdram yadd drashfanupaiyati/  
gunebhyad cha param vetti mad-bhdvam so’dhigachchhati /r.

210. ibid, xiv, 20 :

“ gundn etan atitya ttin dehl deha-samudbhavdn/  
janma-mrityu-jard-dukkhair vimukto’mritam abiute//”.

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are the same; he is the same in honour and dishonour, the same with friends and foes; he has renounced all initiative of action; and, he serves Me with the unswerving discipline of devotion (bhakti-yogena) – Such a person is said to have transcended the rule and sway of the gunas; thereafter he becomes fit to attain the eminence of Brahman, 211 Tydga (renunciation) of karma, again, does not mean the absolute giving up of =doing anyt h i n g (pari-tydga) or inaction; it is not avoidance or evasion; such a giving up of all activity would partake the quality of tdmasa nature. 312 On the other hand, when karmas are abandoned from fear of physical sufferings and pain, it is called rdjasa tydga, and will never yield the fruit of a bona fide tydga 213 The real tydga is the sdttvika tydga, which is accomplished when karmas are performed because they have but to be performed, abandoning all attachment as also the desire for their fruit. 214

This is the general outline of the Gita theory of the individual's psychological make-up, – of his tendencies, dispositions, inclinations, interests and aspirations, – in terms of the gunas innate in him. And, this theory is closely related to the problem of social relations, group characteristics, and social organization. The gunas basically determine the tendencies and aptitudes, the potentialities and the limitations, and .directions of successful social contribution by the individual. They also determine the trends of his traits and ■character. And these factors are to be taken into account when the individual's relations with the society and for the purposes of social order and organization are to be considered. All the

21 X. “prakasam cha pravrittim cha moham eva cha pan\$ava/  
na dveshti sampravrittdni na nivrittani kdnkshati//”,  
uddsnavad astno gunair yo na vichalyate/  
gund vartanta ityeva yo’vatishthati nengate//”.  
“sama-dukhka-sukhah svasthah sama-loshtdsrna-kanchanah/  
tulya-priyapriyo dhiras tulya-nindatma-samstutih //”.  
“mandpamanayos tulyas tulyo mitrari-pakshayoh/  
sarvarambha-paritydgl gwyatitah sa itchy ate//”.

“mam cha yo’vyabhichdrena bhakti-yogena sevate/  
sa gwidn samatityaitdn brahma-bhuydpa kalpate//”.

ibid, xiv, 22-27.

212. ibid, xviii, 7.

213. ibid, xviii, 8.

214. ibid, acviii, 9.

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karmas i.e., activities and occupations necessary for the social organization, upkeep and progress are classified in accordance with these psychological apparatuses in the individual called gunas ( guna-karrna-vibhdgcLsh ) 215

Again, just as the predominant guna in an individual determines the general trend of his nature, so also the different types of karmas are differentiated and classified, and are expected of and imposed ( karmdni pravibhaktani) upon different types of men according to the gunas with which each type is naturally endowed and influenced (svabhava-prabhavair) . 216 Thus, the karmas of a Brahmana in accordance with his natural inclinations are, leading a life of serenity, self-restrain, austerity, purity, forgiveness, straightforwardness, knowledge, wisdom and belief in God; 217 the Kshatra-karmas, in view of the natural inclinations of a Kshatriya, are connected with expressions of valour, prowess, courage, alertness, bravery, generosity, and giving protection to the weak . 218 The Vaisya-karmas, again, considering his nature, are connected with agriculture, trade and merchandise; and the karmas of the Sudra are of the nature of service and attendance of the other varnas 219 and assisting them in the fulfilment of their karmas as noted above (parichyatmakam karma).

We have also seen, elsewhere, how in the Mahabharata too there are theories according to which varna was determined according to the karmas and not by the mere fact of one's birth. There is an essential semblance of this way of determining the varna with the varna theory based on the psychological principle of gunas. In the Vishnu Purana, once more, we meet with this psychological basis of varna . It is said there that when the Creator Brahma desired to create, those in whom sattva guna was predominant sprang from his mouth and were known as Brahmanas. Those in whom rajas predominated originated from his breasts and were known as Kshatriyas. Those in whom both rajas and tamah predominated originated from his thighs and were known as Vaisyas . Lastly the Sudras sprang from his feet, and their predominant psychological

215. CrI. iv f 13.

217. GL xviii, 42.

218. *ibid*, xviii, 43.

219. *ibid*, xviii, 44.

216. GL xviii, 41.

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characteristic was *tamos* ( *tamah-pradhdnah* ) 220 The *Vdyu Parana* gives the account of the *varnas* again in the same psychological terms . 221 In the same *Parana*, the division of means of subsistence or of livelihood or professions (*vdrtta*) between the four *varnas* is said to have been done by the *Svayam-bhu* (i.e., the Self-Existent, the Self-Created) according to their propensities ( *yathd - rabdh*dh ) , 222 "Those of them who were rapacious and destructive, he ordained to be *Kshatriyas*, the protectors of others. The men who attended on these, fearlessly speaking the truth, and propounding the sacred knowledge with exactness (*yathd-bhutam* ) , were made *Brahmanas*." Those engaged in cultivation, etc. were *Vaiiyas*, the providers of subsistence (*vritti-sddhakdn*) ; and, those who did menial work were *Sudras* . 228 Similarly, in the *Bhagawata-Purana* we are told that the four *varnas* are meant to follow the four classifications of duties and obligations such as we have already noted elsewhere . 224

The *Sukra-Ntti* speaks the same thing in different words. Men are said to be of three classes according to their nature and characteristics – *sdttvika* , *rdjasika* , and *tdmasa* 22 ^ It is these characteristics, and not mere birth, that determine a man's *varna*. But, for *Sukra-Ntti* , these characteristics determine a man's *varna* even before his birth, influencing his destiny (*prak-tana*) , and yielding for him birth in a particular *varna*. 22 \* What the *Suhra-Niti* really seems to say, therefore, is that an individual's birth in a *varna* is not the original determinant of his *varna*, but that this birth itself has been determined by his *sdttvika*, *rdjasika* or *tdmasa* kind of tapes (discipline) of his activities in his former births! And what is more, his 'intellectual disposition' in this birth, too, is determined 'according to the effects of his deeds in the previous births' (*pr«Jc-*

*karma-phala*) 227 This is similar to the theory that we have met

^ ,

220. *Vistuju-Pura*. i, 6, 3-5 , ( – from Muir's *Ori Sanskr. Texts*, Vol, i, p. 60).

221. Vayu-Pura. ix, 36-42 ; (Muir's Ori. Sanskr . Texts , i, pp. 81-82).

222. And, the Mark. Pura. has \*yathci-nydyam yathagunam\  
'according to fitness and other qualities'. – As noted by Muir. op. cit., i% p.  
97 note.

223. Vayu-Pura. ix, 160-165 – from Muir: Ori. Sanskr . Texts, i, pp.  
80-87.

224. Bhig, Puri, vii, 11, 14-24. 225. Sukra. i, 69-72 ; etc.

226. ibid. 73-92. 227. ibid, i, 89-92.

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'with at one place in the Mahabharata, where it is explained by  
MaheSvara in like terms.

V

Most of the basic ideology on varna theory and its relation to karma, dharma, guna and other broad principles mentioned in the preceding pages still persists in the mind of the average Hindu. Recent field studies in India, especially in the village communities, seem to bring this out very clearly. 228 According to a most recent study made by a psychiatrist-anthropologist 229 in a village community in Rajasthan though there are many sub-castes in the villages as in all over India, there is also a broad classification of the villagers, often referred to and recognized as such by them in their conversation and social relations, into the four main varnas , viz., Brahmanas, Kshatriyas (Rajputs), Vaishyas (Bamas), and Sudras (menials, etc.), – and one more added to these, viz., the Untouchables. "The traditional pattern of caste-interrelationship seemed indeed to be the most stable feature of village social life" 230 in the community. Caste, however, was determined by birth, which, in turn, according to the villagers, was the result of the accumulated virtues and sins during one's previous births (his karma). One's dharma consisted in carrying out the duties and obligations and enjoying the prerogatives assigned to one's caste. There was also a recognition of the fact, sometimes mentioned by the people, that men belonging to the four different castes were now-a-days not keeping to their duties and obligations and have been behaving in ways not appropriate to their caste-dharmas. There was also ad-

miration and respect for those who were true to their caste modes  
<rf dchara (behaviour) and vichdra (thought). Though the mem-  
bers of the three upper castes (which were studied in the investiga-  
tion under reference), strongly criticized each other's caste for its

228. E.g., the studies of Carstairs, Dube, Marriott, and Srinivas  
mentioned in the Bibliography. See also, in this connection, Risley's  
observations quoted on pp. 5-6 ante.

It may be mentioned here that out of a total population of 357  
million of India, 82 per cent lives in its village.

229. G. M. Carstairs : The Twice-Born : A Study of a Community  
of High-Caste Hindus . Hogarth, London, 1957.

230. *ibid.* p. 57.

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members' failures, shortcomings and pretences, no one expressed  
the wish to have been bom in another caste than his own. The  
caste-roles were unquestionably taken for granted. This, in the  
author's view, discouraged ambition and initiative of the individual.  
The younger members of the community were beginning to take  
up professions and occupations which did not fit in with the tradi-  
tional hierarchical patterns of hereditary occupations . 231 Each Hindu  
learnt 'the traditional fundamentals of karma , dharma and moksha T  
the inevitability of the cycle of births and re-births, the need to lead  
life without attachment to worldly things, the value of selflessness,  
equanimity, and so forth from the older men's repeated sayings,  
listening to the songs in praise of gods which are sung at the several  
festival days and to the dissertation with which they are accom-  
panied, attending religious discourses and enactments of episodes  
from the Rdmayana and Mahdbharata in the temples, and in other  
informal ways , 232

## VI

We may now consider the modem thought on the classification  
of a society into different groups in general, and on the castes in  
particular. This will serve on the one hand, to enlighten us regard-  
ing the genesis of social classes and their effect upon the social



organization; on the other hand, our view of the Hindu conception and theory of the varnas may also offer criticisms against the opinions generally held in modern times on the problem of social classes. A mutual criticism of the Hindu view of social classification into the varnas and the modern views on social classification may<sup>^</sup> thus enable us to arrive at a common understanding of the organization of society such as is likely to function with the best possible results,

Modern students of social institutions have been recently pointing out that some sort of social classification has always been present and is found to exist in any society, ancient or modern, which is not too crude or primitive . 233 Ward, for example, pointed out how

231, *ibid.* pp. 58, 146.

232, *ibid.* pp, 144 ff. See also, pp. 80-124 for current beliefs in the village concerning God, varnashrama dharma , moksha, bhakti, etc.

233, cf e.g. R. M. MacIver : "Community", pp. 124-5 ; also C. H. Cooley : "Social Organization" pt iv- "Social Classes"

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social classes similar to castes in India were in existence in European society. "The four so-called 'Estates' of European History, so clearly recognised in the eighteenth century, correspond so well to the four great castes of India ." 234 Thus, the First Estate which consisted of the clergy, the Second Estate consisting of the warrior or ruling class- the nobility, the Third Estate consisting of the merchants and the business-class, and the Fourth Estate consisting of the commons of England or the bourgeoisie of France – the labourers and artisans, correspond to the Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra varnas of India. In Ward's view, castes exist in all countries which have undergone the struggles between different races through history. In support of this view he adduces evidence from the forms of social organization in Greece, Rome, Polynesia and other countries. Similarly, Small also opines that in every society, there exists the tendency to create social classes and further their stratification into castes – especially into the three rigid classes, viz., the privileged, the middle class, and the lower unprivileged class without property rights or influence . 235 The privileged classes make all attempts and methods to perpetuate this kind of social differentiation in order to retain their privileges; and thus, the process of social stratification, once started, continues to persist for a long time and

is even intensified by passage of time . 238 Said Sumner: "I have sought diligently in history for the time when no class-hatreds existed. ... I cannot find any such period ." 237 And, Maclver, and also Cooley have pointedly drawn our attention to the fact that in the West today 'wealth' is a determinant of social classes as against 'birth' in the East; and we may add, that to some extent at least, in the West today, birth also is a determinant of the social class to which the individual is to belong. However, wealth may be said to be a less rigid determinant of social class than birth; because wealth is concrete, acquirable and alienable, while birth is not so . 238 But

234. L. F. Ward : "'Social Classes and Sociological Theory" in Amer . Jour, of Socio Vol xiii, pp. 617-27. Cf also Ralph Linton : \* The Study of Man ", pp. 127-128, Appleton Century, 1936.

235. A. W. Small : General Sociology (1920), pp. 275 ff.

236. *ibid.*

237. The Forgotten Man and Other Essays, Ed. by A. G. Keller, 1913, Yale, p. 253.

238. Maclver : Community p. 124, note.

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wealth is also heritable!

And here, therefore, may be said to be the fundamental distinction between social class and caste, more or less similar to the distinction between varna and jati. A caste is comparatively a more rigid social class, to which transition from another class becomes well-nigh an impossibility. The still-prevailing distinction between the nobility and the common people in some Western countries is an instance of caste-consciousness, where even wealth or intellect could not yield that status which birth may yield. As Kroeber has said, "castes are a special form of social classes which, in tendency at least, are present in every society." 23 ^ While social classes are comparatively flexible, castes are rigid groups, permanently separated from each other by tradition, custom or even law.

An interesting study of an originally "classless" society which gradually gave rise, in the course of a short period of about 40 years, to social stratification was made recently by Eva Rosenfeld under the

sponsorship of the Social Science Research Council of U.S.A.: 240

The social system in question was the collective settlements in Israel <called 'kibutz' or 'kibbutz,' a term which means "group")\* the first of which was established in 1910, and all of which have been mainly agricultural, though Industrial branches are gradually developing. Each collective consists, on an average, of about 200 members or about 500 souls, but there are some large ones with over 1,500 souls. The collectives belong to the General Federation of Trade Unions (The Histadrut ). Here, all property belongs to the commune, and members who leave it have no claim on any part of it. Members are assigned to work by an elected Work Committee. All administrative officers are elected by the general meeting or by the workers of the organisation concerned for certain periods, and positions and duties keep changing hands. 241 i The basic norm is: 'from everyone according to ability, to every-

239. " Ency . of Sod. Sc." Ed. by E. R. A Seligman and A. Johnson, Vol. in- Art. "Caste", by A L. Kroeber.

240. Rosenfeld, Eva : 'Social Classification in a 'Classless' Society", Amen. Social Rev . Dec, 1951, 16, 6, 766-74. See also , Weingarten, Murray: Life in a Kibbutz, pp. 173. The Reconstruction Press, New York, 1955. in this book, which is a more recent account than the above one, the author, who himself helped to found and develop a kibbutz, describes the agricultural type of social settlement that has developed in Israel in recent years. The members of the kibbutz are expected, on joining the collective, "to transfer all their wealth to the kibbutz treasury", which "then undertakes to be completely responsible for their needs".

241. *ibid.*

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one according to need\* ". 242 One's first assignment may be that of a manager of a farm; his next one may be connected with kitchen duty. It may also happen "that the manager of an important branch . . . lives in a smaller room, has primitive furniture, worse clothes, and eats less well than some of the unskilled workers who happen to be sickly and need special food and housing - All commodities are distributed centrally and in kind; food is eaten in the communal dining hall. Children are brought up, from birth, in communal children's houses/' 243

The forty-year old history and development of social life in these collectives is revealing. At least two social strata have emerged "out of an initially undifferentiated group of young adults living in an equalitarian and demo-

cratic system and bent upon preventing the crystallization of fixed social strata", 244 especially of "the emergence of economic differentiation." There are no economic classes, and consequently, no 'class struggle', in the kibutz society. Yet, the social strata that have emerged "have different vested interests with respect to institutional change, and the roles they play in the actual process of change reveal this conflict of interests." 245 Members with high and low status regard each other with a set of stereotype attitudes, and in their relations the awareness of being a distinct social type is clearly expressed. The high and low strata play distinct roles in the process of institutional change and the difference in their Weltanschauung is well known." 246

The type of stratification emerging is, however, a very special one. Individuals possessing ability, initiative, and leadership qualities have come up. "Functional necessity forces the group to keep these highly valuable and esteemed members within a narrow range of important, managerial positions. Prestige becomes associated with these positions, which are, then, used as an index of high social status." 247 However, high social status does not bring economic or material reward, but only emotional rewards. The individuals in high positions feel a satisfaction in their ability to identify with larger social interests and with the future of the group. There is a tendency for the children of the top class to rise up rather easily because "their parents' intelligence and abilities (and often also personal integrity and a very high standard of values) are often transmitted" to them, "whether through heredity or through personal contact and influence," and also because "some of the halo effect' of the parents does fall on their children. The sons and daughters, of 'big shots' in the kibutz movement are regarded as the aristocracy among the growing crop of second generation youth." And this, despite the fact that the original criteria of status, viz., intelligence, ability, devotion to collective values and good work performance are still applied to the second-generation mem-

242. *ibid.* p. 767.

243. *ibid.* p. 767.

244. *ibid.* p. 766.

245. *ibid.* p. 767.

246. *ibid.* p. 774.

247. *ibid.*

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bers. Hence, it seems that once social stratification makes its start in any form, there are self-perpetuating forces also generated along with it 2 4 8

As we have said, then, some kind of classification is bound to exist in all societies. Social classification is a phenomenon which it would be impossible to abolish in any society. Men differ from each other in their natural endowments, in their intelligence, special abilities and talents, moods, personality traits and other innate characteristics. Even twins differ from each other in these characteristics. Howsoever much we may cry for equality amongst humanity, we cannot avoid differences between man and man in terms of natural abilities, capacities, intelligence, and aptitudes. In social affairs and social communications, such individual differences are apt to give rise to the formation of social groups, each of which consists of individuals who find themselves agreeable to each other because of general similarity of tastes, vocations, likes and dislikes, social status, and such other factors . 249 Apart from this general similarity of views and tastes which brings individuals together, there is another factor referring to social utility that binds men together into different groups. A human being is able to accomplish skill, mastery and success better and more efficiently in company and in cooperation with a group of persons engaged in common occupations. Such cooperation of a group of minds is, on the one hand, due to common calling, common problems, common solutions; and, on the other hand, it is fostered and nurtured by all these and by a feeling of common bond underlying their activities and their minds. Here, we must also reckon with another factor which is closely allied with the above, viz., a feeling of being different from other social groups on account of differences in callings, giving rise to different problems and difficulties from those other groups.

There is yet another force which may foster and perpetuate class-differentiations. This force works through the family institution. It is not only most likely that the father may transmit his

248. *ibid.*

249. See, e.g., R. S. Ellis ; "The Psychology of Individual Differences," (1930), Ch. xvi- 'Individual Differences and Social Differentiation,' pp. 386-404. Also, A. Anastasi : *Differential Psychology* , Rev. Ed. t MacMillan, N. Y., 1958.

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occupation and calling to his children, but it is in many cases also ordinarily advisable that this should be so, unless any of the children show a positive disinclination towards the family occupation, or a positive inclination towards a different occupation, or they are not, as in most cases in modern times, in touch at all with their father's occupation. The father is conversant with the secrets, the hidden intricacies as well as the difficulties of his own occupation or craft and with their solutions, due to long experience; and the child can take advantage of his knowledge and experience without any special efforts or trouble or expense of energies on his part. So again, the children's constant contact with the family occupations is naturally likely to create in them a predisposition towards them. It is therefore natural as well as desirable, in the ordinary course of events, that family trades and occupations should be carried over from father to son. But this should not be a compulsory tradition.

The phenomenon of social classes can be viewed from two sides in order to get a full perspective of the issues involved, from the social-psychological side on the one hand, and from the individual\* psychological side on the other; though, it must be remembered, that such classification of the viewpoints is more or less arbitrary and academic; for, in regard to the phenomenon of social classes as in regard to most others, the social and the individual aspects merge into each other at various points in such a complex manner as to be inextricable from each other excepting in an artificial way. At the same time, also, such distinctions are more than a mere intellectual exercise, for they do afford valuable insights into societal phenomena which are useful when we are faced with the problems of social change, – the desirable and needed change as well as analysis of the accomplished changes in the history and social life of man for a proper perspective of the same.

Looking at the question, then, from the social side, as we have seen, no society can remain classless. Classes emerge in society out of a functional necessity, as Kingsley Davis and W. E. Moore have pointed out in a penetrating analysis of social classes. "Curiously, the main functional necessity explaining the universal presence of stratification", observe these writers, "is precisely the requirement faced by any society of placing and motivating individuals in the social structure ." 250 As a functioning system, society must distri-

bute its personnel into groups according to the duties and the contribution of activities it expects from these respective groups for its own stability and progress, largely the former. And, for this purpose it must devise ways and means for inducing the right type of individuals into the right groups and fill in the right positions. These means and inducements constitute the motivating devices for individuals to go into those positions and places such as they can attain readily and accept these as their due positions. In addition, society must also devise ways and means to induce the individuals, who have found themselves into their own suitable positions, to perform their duties of the respective positions and do their utmost by way of creative efforts in the given positions. As the authors further point out, this is true of competitive as well as non-competitive societies; only, in competitive societies, individuals will strive to attain positions which they desire, and therefore the motive to compete with others in order to rise in one's status attains greater importance in such societies; while in non-competitive societies, the motive to perform the duties of one's position to the best of one's abilities is given greater importance . 251

Now, obviously, there is a variety of social duties requiring a variety of abilities, talents and training; and there is also a variety of talents to be found among the members of the society. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the society to have a system whereby individuals are placed in proper positions in accordance with the kind of talents and training each of them have. This is essentially the problem of personnel placement, or 'social placement', as Davis and Moore call it\* Having placed the individuals, it is further the responsibility of the society to see that their respective duties are diligently performed by the individuals; and this leads to the inevi-

250, Davis, Kingsley & Moore, W. E. : "Some Principles of Stratification", Ameri. Social. Rev. April 1945, 10, 2, 242-49. (Italics ours). These authors' thesis that the universality of social stratification is the inevitable consequence of the functional importance of some social roles and positions and the necessity for placing the right type of individuals with the right type of abilities in these positions for achieving social ends has been confirmed by Rosenfeld's study mentioned above, pp. 324-326.

251. *ibid.*

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table "system of rewards that can be used as inducements " 252 and, we may add, also a system of punishments for failure to carry out expected duties. Further, since all duties are not functionally of equal importance for the social sustenance nor do they require equal amounts of abilities and training, society must also have a system of distributing the rewards (and punishments) differentially according to the social importance of the abilities and positions. 'The rewards and their distribution become a part of the social order, and thus give rise to stratification .' 253 The reward that society can offer are of three kinds, the material things which contribute to individual's sustenance and comfort, those which contribute to "humour and diversions", and those which contribute to the individual's self-respect and ego-expansion. This last, though largely a matter of other peoples' attitude and opinion, is yet as important as the first two, as Davis and Moore have pointed out . 254

It seems that in the Hindu view, the first, that is, the economic and material means of sustenance were never a measure of reward or of superiority of social status; and in fact these were very often far from enough for the highest social class; and, the means of comfort were practically absent, at least so far as the highest class was concerned. In fact, members of this class were expected to find comfort in the most uncomfortable material things of life, viz., huts for living in jungles or outskirts of the cities, towns and villages; simple, coarse and sparse clothing; simple food; and on the whole a Very austere life. And, even though all of them were perhaps not leading lives in huts in the jungles or outskirts of villages, they were generally living a life of simple habits and less material wants. The same may be said to be generally true of the amenities of humour and diversion. Reward in terms of social prestige, of esteem of the high and the low, was the only thing available to this Class for the due performance of their duties in society.

Looking at the picture of class-phenomenon from the side of the individual's attitude and outlook and the psychology governing the same, we must at once reckon with, first of all, the feeling of

252. *ibid.* p. 243.

253. *ibid.*

254. *ibid.*

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“consciousness of kind” 265 which plays a fundamental role in all group activities of man. Ginsberg has analysed and interpreted the psychology of classes from the subjective side in terms of the theory of “sentiments”. Sentiments are “systems of emotions or emotional dispositions centering around a common object or having a common nucleus”. 256 The sentiments which form the bases of class-formation are of three kinds: First, of course, is the ‘consciousness of kind’, that is, an awareness of resemblance or similarity with the other members of a class in the possession of certain common ways of behaviour, conduct and outlook, and of difference from those of the members of other classes than one’s own; a feeling of equality with them, of being at one with them; sharing a number of important social interests, ideas, ideals and aspirations in common with them; a feeling of ‘belonging’ to that group naturally, as it were, mostly by sheer birth and without any conscious effort or striving on the part of the individual to belong to the class; and a feeling of “being at ease with them.” 257 Secondly, there is a feeling of inferiority in relation to those belonging to the social classes which

255. This term was first coined by Giddings and explained by him in his *Principles of Sociology* (pp. 16, ff.). T.N. Carver in his ‘*Essential Factors of Social Evolution*’ remarks that this is “one of the most clarifying concepts ever introduced in sociological discussions. It is the key to understanding a great many problems of both theoretical and practical nature” (p. 164). The phrase was coined by Giddings to express his conception of the basis of group life. Giddings explains the term thus; “The original and elementary subjective fact in society is the ‘consciousness of kind.’ By this term I mean a state of consciousness in which any being, whether low or high in the scale of life, recognizes another conscious being as of like kind with itself. . . In its widest extension, the consciousness of kind marks off the animate from the inanimate. Within the wide class of the animate it next marks off species and races. Within racial lines the consciousness of kind underlies the more definite ethnical and political groupings, it is the basis of class distinctions, of innumerable forms of alliance, of rules of intercourse and of peculiarities of policy. Our conduct towards those whom we led to be most like ourselves is instinctively and rationally different from our conduct towards others, whom we believe to be less like ourselves”. (Giddings : *Principles of Sociology*, pp. 17-18 quoted by T. N. Carver, op. cit.).

248. ^ Ginsberg, M. : Art. “Class-Consciousness” in *Ency. Soc. Sc.* ; also in his book *Sociology* , Home Uni. Lib., London, 1934, ch. vi

257. Ginsberg : *Sociology*, p. 161,

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stand higher in the social hierarchy, the degree of inferiority being proportionate to the distance between one's class and the higher one. And thirdly, there is a feeling of superiority in relation to the members of the classes which stand below one's own in the social hierarchy, the degree of superiority being proportionate to the distance between one's class and the lower one . 258 These psychological factors play their part in aggravating feelings of class differentiation and strengthening and deepening their roots, and thus lead to more and more rigid castes in course of time.

The foregoing analysis will enable us to visualize clearly the dangers and evils of a system of social classes which is directed towards or has developed into a rigid stratification based on a concentration of power, authority, prestige and economic and material rewards all together for the 'higher' classes. Yet, it should also be clear that criticisms which are applicable to the social classes that have attained permanence and fixity purely on the basis of descent or family lineage cannot be applicable to the strict varna theory. For, it has to be specially noted, that the varna organization is so conceived that there could be no room for any varna to consider itself as being placed in a position of greater or less advantage or disadvantage with reference to another. Each varna is designed to occupy a particular position in the society, not with reference to any advantages or special rights, but with reference to its capability and likelihood to carry out a particular portion and aspect of social obligations; and what may appear to be advantages or special privileges of a varna are primarily intended only to secure the best possible environment and circumstances in order to enable that class to carry out its obligations to the best of its abilities. To take a concrete illustration: The Brahmana is entrusted with the duty, pre-eminently, of transmitting the intellectual and the spiritual culture of the people, and also to keep it unsullied by generally maintaining its sterling quality. With this end in view, he may have been granted certain apparently advantageous rights and privileges, as say, for instance, a right to start education at an earlier age than members of the other varnas , or an easy access to the King, or a general respect and honour at the hands of all the other varnas . But it would be wrong therefore to suppose that he stands in a

258. *ibid.* pp. 159-61.

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specially advantageous position as compared to the other varnas , when we take into consideration the dharmas of a Brdhmana defining his obligations and duties which .refer almost entirely to the general, material and spiritual well-being of the whole group; and also that he is called upon, more than any other varna, to cultivate a spirit of selflessness and self-surrender with a view to maintaining general social stability. Upon his shoulders rest the highest responsibilities; and failures, and errors of omission or commission on his part in certain respects make him more severely liable to punishments than any other varna . 259 Similar responsibilities with their attendant privileges and liabilities are defined for each of the other varnas . In fact, the entire varna-scheme is devised to coordinate and assemble the best and the utmost of group welfare, by yoking each section of the group on to duties and responsibilities in terms of the efficiency of the specific work and service each of the sections is able to render unto the community life.

The uarna-scheme could be said to be intended to promote social organization in another direction also. It seeks to build up and promote social equilibrium and solidarity through a special kind of economic organization. Thus, the vama-dharma denies the accumulation of wealth to the Brahmana; his main dharma lies in spiritual and intellectual quests. The Kshatriya may accumulate wealth so much as is necessary for the upkeep and protection of the people dependent upon him and has to use it for the same purpose; his principal dharma lies in directing his energies towards expression of valour, bravery and even might, but with a view to giving protection to the weak. The Vaisya is allowed to accumulate wealth, but with' a view to strengthening mainly the economic resources of the society of which he is a member and not for the purpose of hoarding merely for personal use. In this way, the three varnas axe expected to make their efforts towards a constructive contribution to the social well-being. But there is always bound to be, in any society, a class of individuals, which is by nature incapable of

259. See, e.g., Man. viii, 337-38, where, in the case of theft, the Sudra is required to repay eight times more in value of the goods stolen, the Vaisya sixteen times more, the Kshatriya thirty-two times more, while the Brahmana is to repay "sixty-four times, or a hundred-times, or even twice sixty-four times" in value. Cf. also Gaut. xii, 15-17, Yaj. ii, 260.

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contributing directly in any very constructive manner for the society; such a class, designated as the Sudra, may yet assist the others who are doing actual constructive work, by directing their energies towards the service of the varnas. That there was no question of prestige and dignity involved in such classification is evident from the fact that according to the theory, each person is said to be born a Sudra; and, we may say, he should be so regarded unless and until he shows his hand in any of the superior modes of constructive social contribution. On the whole, therefore the varna - theory was devised with a view to engaging the different types of human energies in different channels suitable to each of them, and all towards the one end of social organization, social stability and social progress.

The one big difference between the origin, development and stability of social classes in India and anywhere else also is that elsewhere, class-status is acquired as a concomitant or corollary of wealth, and is accompanied by power and authority, whereas in Hindu India a perfect dissociation was attempted and even achieved between wealth and status, between power and authority, between disinterested pursuit and achievements in science on the one hand, and temptations of worldly comforts on the other.

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Now the question before us is: if it is not possible to demolish the natural human tendency to create classes in society, could it be possible in any way to demolish or check the segregative and separatist tendencies to which these social classes may give rise? In other words, if the rise of social classes is an unavoidable phenomenon in the society, in what way could it be possible, in the interest of social solidarity and social organization, to avoid the stratification of the classes, to check the tendency to turn these classes into watertight compartments with rigid restrictions on the mobility between the classes?

The remedy, one may be allowed to say, could be found in our own 'socio-psychological heritage'. If only we try to look back, through the hundreds of years, to the original spirit in which our social institutions were conceived and formulated, we shall find much light on the very vexed problems confronting the stability of

our society today.

The first point to be made in this connection is that the greater evil of the present caste-system is a product of the uncompromising rigidity of the heredity principle involved in it. In the system of castes now in vogue, – in India, and all over the world in some form or other, – we have gone far astray from the original principles which governed the varnas. The original principles on which the varnas used to be based were such as we have already noted, either the principle of choice of the duties prescribed for any of the varnas, or the principle of the gunas – the innate psychological disposition of man determining his inclination towards one of the four broad groups of vocations and duties. We must try to fix varna on the basis of what man does, or rather what he is actually capable of doing, amongst his fellow-beings and for them, and not merely on the basis of whom he is born of. Social classes, on such understanding, should be so flexible, so open, as to admit transition of individuals from one to the other if desired and deserved without any undue premium upon mere descent.

There is another very pertinent and noteworthy consideration in this connection. The idea of 'rank' and the consequent ideas of status ought not to be associated with the idea of varna. There ought to be no special rights, no special privileges and no special dignities which may be considered as advantageous prerogatives over others, associated with any varna. The ideas of 'social distance', of 'higher' and 'lower', among the varnas ought never to find place in the practice of varna-theory. In other words, if the formation of social classes is an inevitable phenomena in any society, it must work on the basis of cooperation and equality and not of competition and inequality. A cooperation among the varnas based on the principle of division of labour in accordance with natural capacities and aptitudes will preserve the social energy and therefore is sure to make for progress. On the other hand, the separatist tendencies at present working among the castes are sure to create disruption in society. Social utility, and not class-dignity, should be the principle governing social differentiation into classes.

One thing must be made very clear here. It must be remembered that here, as elsewhere, equality of status does not mean and has not to be confused with identity of occupation, calling or vocation. Any honest occupation is to be deemed as worthy of respect

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and honour as any other. We must try to forget entirely the idea of associating particular vocations with special respect, and particular other vocations with disrespect. All persons must be deemed equal in the eyes of law and morality. There must be equality of opportunity to all in the social, political as well as economic fields, – opportunity such as is consistent with each individual's aptitudes and abilities and inclinations. That there exist individual differences in nature and inherent traits, abilities, talents, interests and aptitudes is now accepted by science; and the task of socially organizing and mobilizing these for their maximum use and contribution to the society as well as for maximum personal satisfaction to the individual is undertaken in the civilized countries by the Vocational guidance' programmes now operating in many of these countries. In the place of degenerate descent and heredity, honour must be given to ability and intelligence, to potentialities and performance. Descent should not be allowed to come in the way of any person's achieving or desiring to rise to the social status he may aspire for, if he shows the ability to do so. In order to achieve these results, we must take the aid of knowledge. The spread of education and knowledge, irrespective of caste and on equal bases, will cure many a social disease.

## CHAPTER DC

## EPILOGUE

For the study in Hindu social organization and institutions which we have made in the pages that precede has been offered in the hope that thereby we may be enabled to envisage, in answer to contemporary social quest, the material, moral and spiritual background of the drama of social life and institutions as conceived by the Hindu.

And, as the main purpose we have set to ourselves concerns with a scientific consideration of the fundamental ideology and spirit around which social order, institutions and purposes have been sought to be formulated and reared, the sources of our presentation must, of necessity, be limited to the older Sanskrit lore. What specifically that lore is, has already been dealt with by us in the Prologue, the introductory part of our survey.

In addition to what is said in the Prologue, the considerations which have persuaded us to undertake the task may be noted here as below: There has been a hue and cry, during recent days, on the one hand, by some of us who have been openly seeking to effect drastic changes in our social institutions by considerably or altoge-

ther doing away with Hindu ideas, traditions and forms; this they call 'Social Reform'. On the other hand, there are many amongst us who have been vehemently crying against such rejections; they proclaim: Whatever is Hindu in practice, in ideas, in ideals, and in institutions, must be 'kept up and preserved as the most sacred heritage of our forefathers. The conflict between these two opposed groups has become extremely pointed and acute during our own times\* To add to this, issues like untouchability and inter-caste marriages have been creating bitterness between these two extreme groups; each group has its own pandits to hold up its doctrines and justify them. At such a juncture, a cool-headed, dispassionate, scientific piece of work that investigates into the basic ideology that implicitly and explicitly governs the Hindu's social psychology and

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cultural pattern, and a systematic presentation of the same, should be the first essential step for all of us who are interested in the progress of our society. Such a systematic presentation should considerably help the clarification of ideas and issues, and may even point us the way for the future.

It would be wrong to suppose that we would deprecate the efforts of the social reformers in this work. We admit that, in view of the enthusiasm created by the new learning of the West, the old type of Hindu life and institutions must have been proving, for these men, rather a groundless, formalistic, insipid and deadening mass of traditions, formalities and impositions, thwarting the expression and expansion of the innermost longings of the individual and the group. At the same time, we must not hesitate to state that the ideological and mental apparatus with which these reformers worked was rather shallow and superficial; nor was the spiritual basis behind Western life and learning sufficiently understood and appreciated in all its bearings by these well-intentioned men. Their understanding of Western thought and culture was mainly on the mere intellectual plane, and mostly of very selective sections of the Western society with which they happened to come in contact or about which they happened to read or learn. And, the deeper spiritual and psychological background behind that thought and culture, if and when at all attempted to be understood, was only superficially discerned by them. Therefore, the ideology of our Social Reformers has proved to be vague, shows lack of basic psychological understanding and content, though it is full of enthusiasm and even good will on the part of those that thought it out and tried to foster it. Without fully grasping the implications of

European values which have evolved out of spiritual struggles for centuries of human effort, our Social Reformers wanted forthwith to abandon the institutions of their forefathers, in whatever decadent conditions they found them, without sufficiently understanding or delving into the basic psychological principles underlying the foundations of their own social heritage. All this has resulted in creating additional social problems which Hindu India has now to solve; for, the 'Reform Movement' has failed to tackle the evils it sought to remedy; and, it has rather created complexities and angularities in social life and outlook which have really become very acute during our own days.

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' On the other hand, let us also point out that the champions of orthodoxy were not altogether without their own shortcomings\* They could not and would not understand the incoming and the onrush of the new issues that contact and even conflict with a strange civilization was incessantly bringing on Hinduism, in terms of a new learning and a strange economic order which was slowly but surely seeking to hold its sway on the mind and ideology of the best and the most enthusiastic members of the Hindu community. The Hindu priest had lost his power of vivifying and revivifying the spiritual life of his flock due to the decadence of the old learning with a great deal of which he was often not even himself well acquainted. Due to such decadence of knowledge, Sastric injunctions tended to be misconstrued and misinterpreted as if they / were inflexible masses of taboos, heaven-bom and therefore unmodifiable; and yet they were hailed as spiritual in spite of this inflexibility\*

The result of all this was that the Hindu social institutions of today are not exactly, even generally, in accordance with the picture of human life, conditions and control, presented by the original Sastras. They deviate from their original Sastric concepts, sometimes in fundamental respects, and sometimes in details. Such deviation is particularly noticeable in the matter of regulations regarding the dharma system and the varna-organization. The deviation of the actual Hindu social institutions of today from the original Sastric bases became the more magnified, in view of the disparity, and sometimes even opposition, between precept and practice in the actual life of those that loudly upheld orthodoxy and the social institutions that it supported. Orthodoxy had, and has, little understanding or care that something has been wrong with itself,



that underneath its citadel of learning and life, its religion, morals and practices, lay a foundation that was decaying or that was tending towards decay. Their fundamental mistake seems to be their comfortable and undisturbed attitude towards things that should have really mattered out of the cry of reform, even though that cry came from the 'Social Reformers'. They should have tried to look into every bolt and nut, every nook and corner, every piece of their social and spiritual structure from its foundation to roof, to find out if the good old house was quite in -order, if it needed repairs, even if drastic, in answer to the call of the human spirit that

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hungered and thirsted for solutions of the innermost problems of life, generated by the new Western intellectual enlightenment.

There is also another criticism that has been levelled by some against orthodoxy. They believe that orthodoxy's upholding of the older modes of life and conduct were a reflection of the feeling of inferiority in the face of superior Western modes of behaviour and of the West's acknowledged technological progress and superiority. They see, in the attempts of the orthodoxy to revivify the 'old' Indian cultural heritage, in the cry to go 'back to the ancient ways', a, psychological mechanism to compensate such feeling of inferiority by professing that, after all, we are not quite so 'backward' as compared to the more advanced peoples! Especially, when orthodoxy tries to insist, in season and out of season, upon the 'spiritual' superiority of the East, and decry the 'material' outlook of the West, one can discern this kind of attitude among them. However, the cry to 'go back to ancient ways' may also have been voiced by orthodoxy because of the vested interests that these people have come to have – in the caste hierarchy and privileges, in the men's privileges over women, and so on.

All this would be true to a great extent of many of those who thoughtlessly want to return to the ancient days and ways in toto – which, of course, they certainly cannot possibly do in reality – and to refuse to move with the times. As against this, however, those who want to justify orthodoxy may as well say that the 'reformers' were anxious to abandon their own ways and ape those of the Westerner merely because they wanted to identify themselves with the latter who were occupying superior position economically and politically in the world today, and were on the whole more powerful and more prosperous.

While the criticisms mentioned above may generally stand well against orthodoxy, we may point out that the reformers, on their part could not, did not and would not put their case either properly, that is to say, in terms understandable to orthodoxy and their followers, or with any faith at least in the ideals of the forefathers. In the midst of hurry and enthusiasm, the Reformers failed to realize what the Sastras have actually done towards preserving the best and the noblest in the Hindu culture. It is true, though not without important qualifications, that every phase of the individual's life was sought to be prescribed by the Sdstras in all its details. Appa-

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tently little was left for the individual to think out for himself or herself. Coupled with this, there was the demand of meek obedience to the letter of these injunctions, ta k i n g them to be unmodifiable and unalterable, under any circum s tances. All this seemed to be so oppressive and unjust to the votaries of the new learning. In the midst of these circ ums tances, the virtues and excellences of the traditional Hindu theory and conception of human life and organi- zation came to be overlooked. In their attempts to do away with some of the degenerated practices and theories in Hindu life of their own days, the Reformers ignored the possibilities of resuscita- ting and revitalizing the historically evolved lore of the forefathers and of taking advantage of their wisdom, preserved, accumulated and enriched by experience and reflection through centuries; and instead, they sought to adopt the ways and outlook of the West in great haste and more or less half-heartedly.

Thus they failed to estimate the value of the Dharma-Sastras on the intrinsic merits of their contents, without understanding that the undesirable forms into which Hindu practices have come to be what they are today was due, of course, to certain historical causes. The intrinsic merit, even in practical life, of our ancient heritage, has the testimonies of foreign travellers in India like Megasthenes and Houen-tsang, at a time when the real spirit of Hindu Dharma - Sastra was actually translated into practice in many ways. To this may also be added the evidence afforded by our literature of old times, i.e., in the drama, the poetry and the folklore which mirror the conditions of the times when they were written. The Dharma-Sastras were obeyed not under coercion, but with a high sense of duty, and with a view to maintaining and furthering the good of the community. And, it is evident that the good of the community was made quite practicable by this attitude of the ancients as en- visaged by the D harma-Sdstras . It is no wonder, therefore, that the

Sastras should have such a great influence over the psychology and ethos of our forefathers. Instead of reminding ourselves of our noble heritage, and trying to live up to it, we have been either 'misconstruing it, or otherwise trying to ape blindly the ways and methods of strange cultures and peoples.

There is also another very important consideration which all , social reformers have to bear in mind. "Nothing is morb certain" says Bartlett, "than that every culture has its 'hard\* and 'soft' points;

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if change is first sought at the former, it will provoke resistance and very likely open discord, while the latter are yielding, and it is from them that reformation will spread ". 1 He further points out that "items ... of material culture are hard' in proportion to the intimacy and number of their relations with psychological possessions . . . (and that) material culture is easiest to change at those points which have become most dissociated from psychological possessions. 'This would carry the further implication that if any newly introduced feature of material culture is to stand a reasonable chance of persistence, it must be linked up with desires, beliefs, ideals, or the like," which have become a part of basic ideology of the concerned people. Every change "must itself fit into seme existing pattern of material and psychological culture".

Now, the material and psychological patterns can hardly be distinguished in any 'culture, excepting in a few matters, perhaps. By and large, all overt behaviour springs from or is the result of or is bound up with the needs and desires, the psychological pattern, of the group. But, some of them are more strongly imbedded into or more basically connected with its psychological pattern, – these would be the 'hard' points, in Bartlett's terminology. Those behaviour modes which are less closely related to the psychological needs are the 'soft' points of the culture.

In terms of the interpretation in the paragraphs above, there is hardly any chance for a new reform to be implemented in a society without resistance, conflicts and disruptive consequences unless the innovation is psychologically and otherwise found or made compatible with the existing pattern of behaviour of the society, or unless that society itself is already seriously feeling the need for the innovation or the reform. "There is, as yet", observes Bartlett, "no general recognition of the fact that the speed, permanence and harmony with which any change of culture can be affected . . .

depend more upon how it is related to what I have called the group's 'psychological possessions' than upon anything else ." 2 "The

1. Sir F. C. Bartlett : Anthropology in Reconstruction . Huxley Memorial Lecture, Royal Anthropol. Inst., London, 1943, pp. 12-13.

2. u Anthropology in Reconstruction " – Reprinted from Nature , 152, (Dec. 18, 1943), p. 710. This article consists substantially of the lecture as it was delivered. The previous citation refers to the Lecture as printed in advance of the delivery of the lecture.

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social anthropologist who sets out to see methods for deciding hard and soft points in particular cultures is almost at once brought up against historical problems. The psychological expressions of culture usually, maybe always, have roots deep down into the past." 3

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We may now direct our efforts to state shortly and in general what a useful and valuable heritage the Hindu seers have given us towards the solution of human problems which we are now facing even more acutely than the ancients must have done.

The first thing that should strike the student of social science here is the deliberative planning, organization and system, a whole thread of an ideology running through, a consistent social philosophy underlying all the institutions and knitting them together into a social pattern or social fabric. At the same time, room has been sought to be left for suitable innovations and changes in accordance with regional and temporal conditions (dela-kala).

It must be said, however, that the Hindus have not fully realized in history the significance and importance of both these provisions together – the need for the systematic planning of life and conduct on the basis of certain values on the one hand, and the necessity of freedom to accommodate or adjust to changing conditions on the other; and, not infrequently, the comprehensiveness of the system was so much stressed as to lead to regard it as a closed system, and rigidity and formalism in life and social inter-relationships and behaviour were developed. Especially, in Hindu India's social history, the orthodoxy and the learned Sastri have been largely responsible for overemphasising the adherence to the letter and the rigid form of the Sdstras , which themselves were hardly

properly understood by them in all their comprehensiveness.

It is, however, very necessary and important to note that the dharma concept embraces, as its essential part, not only a comprehensive planning out of man's behaviour in terms of several prescriptive regulations, but it also embraces as an equally essential part, the principle of dynamic growth, of flexibility and modifiability, of relaxability in the prescriptive regulations in accordance

3. *ibid.*

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with the changing conditions and times (de/a and kdla). This dynamic quality of dharma has been expressed by the Hindu thinkers in a variety of ways and at many places . 4 It is also apparent in the provisions they have made by way of what they call the apad-dharmas , the dharmas in times of distress. But, owing to historical reasons largely and also due to the apathy and the lack of sincerity of the orthodoxy, this dynamic aspect of Hinduism and its relativity to the conditions and the times have been overlooked and even neglected. Yet, history has witnessed that the sheer inherent force of these accommodative principles in dharma have occasionally triumphed, as if by self-propelling, when, for instance, Hinduism accepted, eventually and without very serious resistance, apparently even rebellious sections and movements like Buddhism whose founder is deeply venerated by the Hindus universally, Jainism, and several other smaller movements too, and recently, the Arya-Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj, and so on; when it accepted as its most illustrious gods Sri Ramchandra who was a Ksatriya by birth and Sri Krishna who was apparently a milkman; when it accepted as its

4. See pp. 28 ff., 73-74, 302 ff., et seq., supra. And also : –  
desa-kalau tu sampreksya balabalam athatmana/  
nndesa-kale kinchit syat de&a-kdlau pratiksitam//

– Mdha. Vana. 28

adharma-rupo dharmo hi kvachid asti narddhipa /  
dharmas chddharma-rupo'sti tach cha jneyam vipaschitah//

– *ibid.* S&nti. 33

sa eva dharmah so'adharma tam tarn pratinaram bhavet/  
 patra-karma-viseshena desa-kalavaveksya cha//

– ibid. 6dnti. 35

a nyo dharmah samasthasya vishamasthasya chaparah/  
 pratishfhito desa-kale 1 dharmo'hyavasthikah smritah/ /

– ibid. fanti. 314

dharma bahuvidhd loke sruti-bheda-mukhodbhavdh/

kula-jditi-vayo-desa-guna-kdla-svabhavatah/

etad dharmasya nandtvam sampad-dpad-vibhedatah/ /

– ibid. Arm.

deiam kdiam vayah saktim papam chaveksya yatnatah/  
 prayaschittam prakalpyam sydd yasya choktd na nishkritih/ /

– Atri. 248

kevalam iastram asritya na kartavyo vinirnayah/  
 yukti-hine vichare tu dharma-hdnih parjdyate/ /

– Brihas., in Pdrdsararn&dhaviya. See supra , pp. 27-23

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illustrious sages and saints Vasishtha,\* born of a prostitute, Valmiki, a fisherman, and later Tukaram, a Sudra, Mirabai, a Ksatriyar lady, Dnyaneswara, born of Brahmana parents but outcasted in the beginning, Namdev, a tailor, Chokha Mela and Rohidas, untouchables, Kablr, a Moslem, and many others irrespective of their low caste and even alien religion.\*\* And, in fact, this accommodativeness and adjustability of Hinduism, because of its inseparability from the very basic tenets that constitute the texture of dharma, has spontaneously expressed itself and has been demonstrated throughout history, beginning from the earliest times when all alien groups which came into contact with the Hindu society were sought to be absorbed and merged into the society along with several of their ways, too, which were absorbed in a spirit of tolerance and accommodation,

\* See pp 313-14, footnote No. 185, supra , where the names of some other revered sages, born of low parentage, are mentioned.

\*\*In this connection, the following news item which appeared in the Times of India , Bombay, (February 4, 1954) may be of interest to the reader : –

#### Hindu Temple Has Muslim as a Priest

The Times of India News Service, Kajkot, February 13.

“A Muslim, a Brahmin and a Sadhu are the priests of a unique temple in Saurashtra, which attracts scores of pilgrims every week.

“Located at Kalawad, an obscure village 20 miles from here (i.e. Rajkot), the temple is dedicated to Shitalamata, offerings to whom are said to cure small-pox. Kalawad is miles away from civilization. The nearest railway station, Jam Vanthali, is 18 miles from Kalawad.

“The temple came into prominence when a community project was inaugurated near Kalawad on October 2 last year. To reach this temple from Jam Vanthali, pilgrims either trek 10 miles or use bus service introduced by the community projects administration,

“Legend gives a historical twist to the origin of the peculiar custom in this temple. . . . Shitalamata Temple is one of a few that escaped the ravages of the iconoclast, Allauddin Khilji, who ruled India many centuries ago. Six Jain and Hindu temples fell before dusk on the day Allauddin mounted an assault on Kalawad. In a desperate bid to save Shitalamata Temple, its Brahmin priest approached a Muslim fakir through a mendicant friend. He persuaded the fakir to intercede with the Mohammedan Emperor on behalf of the Brahmin priest Allauddin did not relent.

“Legend has it that the fakir then used his supernatural powers and rendered Allauddin blind till he left Kalawad. The Emperor re-

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down to modern times, in many directions. However, there was hardly anything ever done by way of deliberative, thoughtful and careful analysis of conditions and circumstances facing the society at a given time, with a view to re-thinking and discovering the

directions and aspects in which the dharma prescriptions need to be revised, modified or discarded, and the most effective and least disruptive modes of realizing such changes. And this has resulted in the decadence of our social organization.

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treated without sacking the temple. As a token of their gratefulness, the people of Kalawad are said to have conferred upon the Muslim fakir and the mendicant the right to be priests and to share the revenues of the temple they helped to save. The Muslim priest and the Sadhu who enjoy this right today are the lineal descendants of the fakir and the mendicant who shielded Shitalamata from the onslaught of Allauddm Khilji centuries ago.

“As time marches on, Shitalamata Temple continues to stand as ' a monument to Hindu-Muslim brotherhood that subjugated bigotry in days gone by”.

Here is another news item from the Sunday Standard f dated July. 4, 1954 : –

In Krishna She Sees Allah

From Our Correspondent

Ahmedabad, July 3

Many scenes of Hindu-Muslim amity were witnessed here yesterday during the ‘Ratha-Y dtra J procession.

The ninety- two-year-old priest, Mushidasji of Jagannath Temple, who was walking on foot with the procession, was greeted by Muslims in Chandantalvadi area. The Muslims gave Rs. 101 as a gift to the priest, who added Rs. 101 and returned the amount to them.

An eighty-year-old Muslim woman, who was trying to have the darshan (i.e., view or sight) of Lord Krishna (who was being carried in the Ratha , i.e., the chariot), said it was a procession of Allah. “Ram and Rehman are one and the same. Please let me have the darshan of Ram in whom I shall see Reheman”, she said.

And here is an extract from a recent article in the Illustrated Weekly of India , dated October 20, 1957, pp. 26-27, with photographic illustrations, by A. K. Karekatte : –

The Shirdi Shrine

“An obscure village, 52 miles from Ahmednagar, in Bombay State, Shirdi is a spiritual centre where some believe an answer can be found



to life's many sorrows and problems.

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If our description of the asrama and the varna schemes in the preceding pages has sufficiently made out that both these schemes were devised as instruments of life, as the best means towards the fulfilment of what was conceived to be the fullest and the most efficient management of the individual, and of the social and economic orders as a whole, then, in this sense, these two schemes are the unique gifts of Hinduism to the world.

It may be that to us of the present age the scheme of the dhamas in all its detailed curricula as laid down by the seers may not be fully acceptable. But if order, progress and social equilibrium have to be sought, the modern world may profitably accept the spirit behind the thinking out and formulation of the asrama system as a whole in order to solve problems connected with the nurture of the individual with reference to the specific and general conceptions

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"It was here that the saint, Sri Sai Baba, lived and died. And around his samadhi has been built a temple, which attracts pilgrims from all corners of India. Loved in his life-time for his simplicity, catholicity and compassion for human suffering, Sai Baba continues to hold sway over the hearts of the multitude even after his death, nearly 40 years ago. . . .

'The cult of Sri Baba transcends religious distinctions and the temple doors are open to all. . . .

"The story of Sai Baba itself is interesting. About a hundred years ago he came to Shirdi, a young stranger, with a Muslim marriage party. He stayed on to make the hamlet famous as a spiritual centre. He was tall, wore a kafni (long robe) in the fashion of a fakir, walked barefooted, maintained himself on alms, practised medicine and accepted nothing from his grateful patients.

"A dilapidated mosque in the village was his home. Was this stranger a Hindu or a Muslim ? Even his biographers have not found

an answer to this question. But they are one in proclaiming that in the large picture of tolerance and love preached by Sai Bāba there is no room for distinctions of caste and creed. He uttered the words *Atth Malik* ("God is Lord") as fervently as he sang bhajans (Hindu devotional songs in praise of God). Under his mellow influence, the village people agreed to hold the\* Muslim *urus* (fair) and the Hindu festival of *Bam-Navaml* (i.e., the ninth day in the first half of the month of *Chaitra* according to the Hindu calendar, which is the anniversary Of the birth of *Shri Bamachandra*) on the same day in a spirit of cordiality. When disciples raised funds to repair the mosque which

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of human life and labour which forms the background of community-life. It may be, that details will differ with different peoples, and, in different regions. But, without doubt, the general framework of the scheme will prove efficient and of eternal values. The young boy-student would be certainly well-advised to live a disciplined, orderly life, like the one laid down for the *brahma-charl*. He particularly learns to begin living with fewest comforts, with fewest wants. He begins to think not of what he can have, but of what and how he can do without some of the comforts and pleasures and conveniences of life, if need be, and learns to get used to conditions lacking ease and comfort. These habits always stand one in

(Continued from previous page )

Sai Baba had made his home he insisted on all the temples in the village being renovated first.

"His compassion for those in pain and misery became widely known and soon he was acknowledged a saint. People drawn from many lakhs flocked around him and heard his discourses, described by his biographers as containing profound spiritual truths. , .

Finally, we may add the observations of a British psychiatrist-anthropologist, G. M. Carstairs, who was bom in India and had the Rajasthan dialect of Hindustani as his native language during his early childhood, and after completing University education in Britain and America returned to India in 1949 for a ten-month stay and again in 1951 and 1952 for study in the personality of high-caste Hindus in village, fictitiously called *Deoli*, in Rajasthan. About the general relations between the different religious groups in *Deoli*, this is what

he has to say : -

“ . . . In Deoli, as is the case throughout southern Rajasthan, almost all of the Banias were Jains, only two families following Vaishnavi or orthodox Hindus ; but they all took part in the festivals of the Hindu religious year, and worshipped at Hindu temples both in Deoli and at pilgrimage-places nearby. These Jains who could boast of more schooling than the majority of their neighbours in the bazar, were more familiar than those with the stories of the Gita, the Mahabharata and the Rāmāyana to which contain so much of the inspiration of popular Hinduism. The eclectic attitude influenced even the relations between Moslems and Hindus in the village. Though neither community would enter the other's temple or mosque, there was considerable sharing in communal and family religious festivals. Thus the Moslems would dress well and give feasts like their neighbours on the Hindu high holidays, and prominent Brahmins and Banias followed the procession of the Tazkia at Moharram, the most important celebration of the local Moslems' year.” ( The Twice-Born, Hogarth, London, 1957, pp. 25-26.)

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good stead in later life, whenever the need arises.

After his studies are over, he is enjoined to marry, and to enjoy the gifts of life, but only within the meaning and limits of the obligations and duties expected of a grihastha as member of a family and of a community. After these obligations and duties are executed in the midst of the fulness of the joys of living, the person may well spend his declining years in retirement, in a spirit of less and less of attachment to the things of the world; instead of struggling through the strifes of existence and achievements, he should now quite advisedly direct his attention more and more to a life of inward peace and meditation; he should now leave the field of activities and achievement for younger people; at the same time, he must always be willing to give the benefit of his experience of the world, and of his moral presence, to the younger folk when they need it and seek it. If this is the general statement of the āśrama - scheme, there must be a universal acceptance of the moral and the higher basis of the dhama-dhanna. If properly grasped and worked out, it should be reasonably acceptable to any society, at any level of its development, in any age and country.

Coming to the varna-organisation:

The question of the basic importance and influence of heredity

in the creation of individuals of superior or inferior ability was first specifically and prominently raised by Francis Gallon <sup>5</sup> , who tried to show that superior or inferior ability is hereditary, and that among humanity, there is a genius class which contributes to the real progress of the society. Karl Pearson <sup>6</sup> continued to collect further evidence and proof by his method of correlation to strengthen the same thesis, and showed that between the two, heredity and environment, the influence of heredity is very much greater in determining individual differences in abilities and intellectual as well as moral excellence. This has been and is, being followed by many scientific studies- It is true that nothing like finality can be achieved by such studies <sup>7</sup> , even in the years to come, because of the impossi-

5. Galton, F. : Hereditary Genius, 1869 ; Natural Inheritance , 1889.

6. Pearson, K. : Treasury of Human Inheritance , Nature and Nurture , (1910), and other papers in the Eugenics Laboratory Lecture Series, London.

7. On the question of heredity vs. environment, see particularly the books of Anastasi , Newman, Freeman and Holzinger ; Hogben ;

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bility of experimentally controlling the one or the other of these two factors in order to observe the effects of the remaining factor. In all the studies that have been made with greatest possible care and scientific objectivity <sup>8</sup> , it has been found that, even in the cases of identical twins reared apart (where apparently heredity is the same but environments differ), and of children born with different heredity but reared in same environment, the two factors heredity and environment still operate in conjunction with each other, and the results could only give some trends and general indications which are yet far from entirely dependable scientific conclusions.

However, these studies do indicate that the problem of heredity has been increasingly occupying the attention of scientists for the purpose of control and direction of human affairs. And, what was - the Upanishad-theory of the Hindus if not, broadly speaking, a huge experiment in the management and direction of human affairs towards the perfecting of human ability in terms of the principle of heredity? <sup>9</sup> It may be that sometimes, genius arises out of low or otherwise unwarranted origins; nevertheless, it would be but wise and proper for any society to fix certain general principles of selection in terms of heredity, for carrying out the various social

responsibilities in the most efficient manner possible and practicable. At the same time, however, it should be remembered that though the presumption would ordinarily be along the lines of these general principles of heredity, yet, of course, no undue importance need be given to mere heredity so as to thwart human ability from expression. In fact, the varna theory in essence did emphasize heredity,

Holmes ; Jennings ; Schwesinger ; Osborn ; and Woodworth mentioned in the Bibliography ; and the Twenty-Seventh and the Thirty-Ninth Yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education of U S.A For a simple, non-technical and lucid and also sound analysis of the problems, see Amram Scheinfeld : The "New" You and Heredity . Chatto and Windus, London, 1952.

8. A careful scrutiny of the studies of fraternal twins and identical twins reared together and those reared apart shows "the futility and artificiality of the idea of untangling nature and nurture influences in the sense of ascertaining the percentage contributions of each in any general sense". H. D. Carter, in Intelligence : Its Nature and Nurture , The Thirty-Ninth Yearbook of the Nat. Soc. for the St. of Ed., Vol. I, p. 248.

9. cf. pp, 321

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but heredity properly understood , in the sense of natural biological equipment. It did not look upon heredity in the more superficial sense of family status or ancestry or lineage. It is necessary to grasp this essential meaning of the varna theory very clearly.

Here, then, the confusion between 'heredity' and 'descent\* (or lineage) must be cleared up, in order that the issues may be understood in their proper perspective. 'Descent refers to the lineage, that is, the parentage, ancestry, and their manifest and known characteristics and traits, and the status and position of the family. Heredity refers to the natural tendencies, talents, capacities, aptitudes, and dispositions of the individual which are native in the constitution of the individual as the result of the inherited biological genes carrying those tendencies and capacities from parent to offspring. Ordinarily, heredity could be judged in advance by descent, i.e. the parentage and ancestry; but such judgement may not always be borne out by facts as the individual grows. An individuals tendencies and talents are not necessarily traceable or related to

the behaviour, traits and tendencies manifest in the activities of the parents or their ancestors, for these ancestors might also have been carrying the latent or recessive seeds of many other traits which may later be reinforced and get the chance of becoming manifest in a descendant or descendants. This may apply to traits which are considered undesirable as well as to those considered desirable in a given society. Heredity provides the individual with certain potential traits, some of which become patent in the individual; but the seeds of other traits also may be carried over latently, and may be transmitted from generation to generation latently or recessively. In the possession of these potentialities, individuals differ from each other, some have superior potentialities, others have inferior ones; or an individual may have superior ones of certain type and inferior ones of certain other type; and so on. These potentialities constitute 'the given', the datum, the nature, the bija of the individual. Thus, the importance and significance of heredity lies, mainly, in the fact that it is the given endowment, and consists of dominant traits, as well as recessive ones which are not manifest in the individual but may be transmitted to offspring.

In contrast with this, the importance and significance of the environment or the ksetra (the field of individual's life and activities) lies in the fact that it is, to a greater or less extent, man's

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creation . A given material could be shaped and moulded, but the extent of such moulding and shaping depends upon the quality and the quantity of the given material. Even inferior material could be shaped and moulded better than it would otherwise be, by proper processing and under proper conditions; but superior material could be turned into still better forms through suitable conditions and processing. The same seems to be true of human potentialities too. They have their own limits, set up by the hereditary nature, for change and improvement; and improvements are possible, under favourable conditions, within those limits. For, even to the same objective environment, individual's will react in a variety of ways, each in his own ways in accordance with his own temperaments, tendencies, needs and capacities. As a matter of fact, no environment could ever be the same for two individuals psychologically, even though physically it appears to be and is the same. On the other hand, with same or closely resembling heredity, differences in environment would affect the individuals differently and are, again, likely to lead to the development of different personality patterns.

This 'given' or the hereditary equipment of the individual however, cannot be fully and unfailingly judged in all cases by the mere knowledge of the descent, i.e., the parentage and the ancestry of the individual on the father's and on the mother's side. For, any of them may have been the carrier, in their constitution, in addition to their known biological and psychological characteristics, of any other characteristics also which were latent or recessive and hence were not manifest but may have been transmitted to their successive generations, and therefore, still have the chance of attaining dominance in any of them. Also, all the characteristics of the ancestors are not necessarily transmitted to every one of the descendants. Hence, lineage by itself is not a sufficient and invariable guarantee of the kind of potential abilities and traits an individual may be born with; though, ordinarily, it may be presumed for many practical purposes that roughly and broadly we may expect individual's potentialities and dispositions in accordance with the lineage, until the contrary is found. As Leonard Darwin put it: "The fact that each hereditary quality of any individual is passed on to some but not to all his descendants shows its results in the following way also. . . . We cannot foretell what will be the qualities of a man before he is born. But if we know the qualities of his near relations

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we can tell a good deal about what his qualities will probably be. This means that, though we should make many bad shots, we should be generally far nearer the truth than if we went by chance." 10

Now these potentialities of the individual require suitable environmental conditions ( ksetra ) and scope for their unfoldment and development. They do not develop in vacuum; they unfold and develop in response to stimuli. And, suitable stimuli in the environment will assist their development, whereas unsuitable or thwarting stimuli in the environment will not only keep them in abeyance but may even stunt them and damage them, and may further lead to frustration and consequent maladjustments in the individuals concerned. This is where the drama theory, as envisaging a plan for the proper training and disciplining of the individual, a scheme for the ha ma (effort) of man in proper environment, comes in.

Until, however, the individual differences in potentialities are revealed clearly, we have no sure means of judging them in advance; and therefore, as far as possible, equal opportunities, scope and environment at least of a minimum sort should be provided for all young children, along the lines of the drama plan, so that the diffe-

rential abilities and potentialities are allowed to flower forth. Hence, according to the theory, every individual at birth is to be considered as no better than a Sudra 11 until his potentialities manifest themselves in one or the other of the four broad groupings of qualities or tendencies known as the varna-laksanas, the characteristic traits of the varnas. As young trainees, therefore, it is desirable to provide for the prince and the pauper the same kind of conditions and environment as far as possible. 12

At the same time, it may be noted that when it is claimed that a Brahmana's son will make a good Brahmana (which is basically similar to expecting an engineer's or doctor's or a soldier's or a businessman's son to continue or take up respectively his father's vocation, and is very commonly done in modern times), it is not the

10. L. Darwin : What is Eugenics ?, Watts & Co., London, 2nd Ed. 1937, p. 18.

11. See pp. 306 ff. Also janmana iayate sudrah samskarad dvija uchyate. And, in the Atharva Veda it is declared : na daso naryo mahitvd vratam mimaya = I do not take anyone as a low-born (dasa) or high born (arya), but I judge him by his qualities.

12. See ch. iv on Education, especially pp. 115 ff. etc.

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heredity in the sense of "descent" or lineage so much as it is really the environment whose influence is actually implicitly accorded a high premium. It is not so much the mere fact that the son is born of a Brahmana or an engineer etc., but essentially because he is bred up, since his birth, in the surroundings and atmosphere which are surcharged with conditions favourable to the creation and development of interests and of easy information pertaining to the respective parental vocation that he is expected to be fit for taking up the same. And yet, this expectation, which is ordinarily reasonable, may be stretched too far to an unjustifiable extent, by insisting that he must invariably be born fit for the parental vocation, contrary indications notwithstanding – to which length the extreme varna or jñati-adherents went. The Jirama-scheme, therefore, will have to be so worked out, in practice, as to allow due scope in terms of common environment for every individual to give unmistakable indications of his potentialities of traits, talents and temperaments.



All this means that it is unscientific and also unnecessary to extol the claims of either of the two, heredity or environment over the other. And, it is possible to look to the improvement of both without neglecting any one of them. Hence it is asserted that the varna theory and the dsrama theory are closely linked up together as varndsrama-vyavasthd. Emphasis on any one of these to the exclusion or neglect of the other is bound to result in undesirable and harmful results, socially and morally. No modifications or changes in any one of these systems could lead to desirable results unless due account is taken also of its interrelations with the other and corresponding modifications are also made in the second.

Writers on social science have often understood the caste-system as dependent so^eJv upon descent, which, of course, it is in its degenerate form, but, to say, therefore, that heredity should be no consideration in social organization is to confuse heredity with descent. Charles Cooley, for instance, in his brilliant analysis of social organization, which is a classic treatise on the subject and has retained much of its suggestive and thought-provocative quality through the years after its first publication 13, refers to caste as “an organization of a social mind on a biological principle. That func-

13. C. H. Cooley : Social Organisation, Scribner's, New York., Blrst published in 1909. The reference here is to the 1927 edition.

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tions should follow the line of descent instead of adjusting themselves to individual capacity and preference evidently means the subordination of reason to convenience, of freedom to order.” According to him, the “ideal principle” would be “not biological but moral, based that is, on the spiritual gifts of the individual without regard to descent.” (Italics ours). This ideal principle would be successfully achieved, says he, “when the population is so mobilized by free training and institutions that just and orderly selection is possible .” 14

Here again, there is, apparently, a confusion between biological heredity and family lineage. Cooley proposes to discard considerations of heredity in the management of social affairs. He thinks that a social classification based on heredity is but an organization of the social mind on biological principles; he sees, underneath such a social classification, a subordination of reason to convenience, a subversion of freedom in the mere interest of maintaining the exist-

ing social order; and he asserts that the ideal principle must not be biological but moral, – as if the biological is necessarily anti-moral! And, yet, he also talks of individual ‘capacity’ and ‘preferences’, ‘spiritual and moral gifts’ of the individuals, without any regard to descent! Heredity considerations are for him subversive of morals, freedom and reason, and are ministrant only to convenience and the upkeep of existing social order, – as if reason and convenience cannot go together, freedom and order are opposed to each other, and heredity and mobilization of population by free training and institutions are contradictories of each other! We would, on the contrary, say that these can be seen to be complementaries of each other, the more we look into the nature and functions underlying these pairs of supposed opposites. We would assert that a just and orderly selection is possible and attainable only if society looks after both biological and nurtural questions relating to the individual and the social group to which he belongs.

To be fair to Cooley, it appears that he wants to attack the social system or systems in which mere lineage or descent in a particular family is taken as a blind and invariable basis for assigning status, position and vocation. And, when in his strictures he refers to ‘heredity’, he means such lineage or descent. On the

14. *ibid.*, pp. 226 ft.

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other hand, when he refers to individual capacity, gifts, preferences, etc. – which is also closely related to heredity or biological inheritance – he seems to imply that individuals showing abilities or talents in certain directions or of certain type should be allowed scope to express them ‘irrespective of their parents’ occupation or status. This means, then, that for social good, we must take biological factors into consideration, contrary to Cooley’s first stated view. We may ordinarily infer biological factors from lineage or parentage; but, we must not insist that the potentialities of the individual will necessarily be like the manifest qualities of the parents and ancestors; we must be prepared to take cognizance of a difference, if and when such difference is shown by the individual, and must be ready to provide suitable scope for his own qualities.

In fact, the *mr^a*-scheme has taken into consideration not merely the biological but also the moral, not merely the social but also the individual, not merely the material but also spiritual issues

into consideration. The rarrca-organization was based not only on biological, but also on psychological and even ethical grounds, aftv,r a reasoned integration of the various aspects of life, individual and social, so that a coordination of all these factors may be made concretely available in terms of organized social institutions. In this manner, the varna theory along with the dsrama system seeks to achieve social efficiency consistent with, and for the sake of, the physical, mental and moral well-being of the community and its members. The vama and dsrama schemes were thus conceived to enable the society to make the best of the potentialities in the individual, so that through the functioning of the best and the finest that individuals are capable of, the best may be formulated and inherited by the group. While the dsrama - scheme pre-eminently conceives the proper nurture of the individual through life, so that the best and the noblest may be bom out of it, the varna - scheme dominantly envisages a proper coordination of the natures of the individual and the group in the interest of social efficiency.

It may be that, due to certain historical causes, while the hereditary aspect of the individual has come to be overemphasised, the nurture of the individual in terms of the dsrama scheme, has come to be overlooked and even neglected. And, we humbly suggest that it is due to this mishap more than to anything else, viz., the neglect of the individual's nurture, that the hereditary principle seems to

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have been over-emphasized and has therefore been misunderstood as even failing us, as if on account of some anti-social element which is supposed to be an essential part of the same.

In the dsrama, the foundations of proper cognition and perception of the world order and man's place in it are sought to be laid down in the individual's mind from early childhood through the procedures of learning (vidya) independently, as far as possible, of the family and other influences, under the care and direct and entire control of a trusted master, who was known not only for his learning but also for his character. The dsrama training also sought to provide the individual with the socially desirable set of goals and motivations in terms of dharma which he was expected to pursue in life after completion of his training period. And, on the whole, for the Hindu, the dharma and the karma ideology, rightly understood, did provide a forceful matrix of motivation in an interrelated manner comprising of the mainsprings of all his activities. Like the cultural ideology of any other people, again, the Hindu cultural

ideology has taken deep roots in the culture pattern of its people through several generations. 15 Those of us who are anxious to reform the Hindu pattern of life must reckon with the deep strength of this dharma ideology, and, when trying to introduce new ideas and forms of behaviours, must see that the right sort of motivation compatible with this ideology is engendered in the Hindu mind, leading to the right sort of behaviour.

As we have already said, the degeneration of varna and dharma organizations has come to be so due to historical causes; and therefore, that in no way can be said to be the fault of the basic ideology behind the varna and the dharma institutions at all. In fact, the early Hindu thinkers had envisaged the possibility of degeneration and even of the divorce and separation of these two schemes as it has come about. Throughout the Hindu scriptures, the possibilities of deviation from and degeneration in all the well-intentioned plans of dharma is an oft-recurring theme of discussion. Sri Krishna him-

15. An idea of how deeply rooted this cultural ideology is even to this day in the mind of the average Hindu could be obtained by studying some of the very recent studies on the village communities in India, like the one by the psychiatrist-anthropologist G. M. Carstairs : *The Twice-Born* ; Hogarth Press, London, 1957.

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self talks of the cycles of degenerations of dharma and its repeated resuscitation and revivification being undertaken and accomplished by the Divine Hand from time to time. And, if the varna and asrama schemes were formulated essentially for the practice and upkeep of dharma , certainly the degeneration or mal-adjustments of these two schemes in any period of history is part of the theory of dharma as laid down by Sri Krishna and other Hindu seers. Thus, Hinduism can entertain every hope for the survival of its social institutions since its basic ideology is rather comprehensive and well coordinated, and it can also be assured of adaptability to the changing conditions of time, space and economy since this basic ideology does not rigidly predetermine its course of development but leaves room for flexible adjustments consistent with the primary laws of human nature and good living.

The Hindu thinkers saw no opposition between social good and social ends on the one hand, and of individual good and individual ends on the other. The basis of the Hindu social order is dharma;

in terms of dharma, all human activities – biological and psychological, economic and moral, personal and social – are defined, and coordinated in terms of the vama and asrama schemes.

The Hindu seers had clearly understood the intimate relation and mutual interdependence of these two schemes of varna and asrama with each other; and, unless the pristine balance between these two fundamental contributions of the Hindu sages is secured and maintained hereafter, it will not be possible to live life to its fullest stature, not merely for the Hindus but also for the peoples of all the world. We venture to suggest that the conflict between man and man, community and community, occupation and occupation, politics and economics, economics and ethics, philosophy and life, religion and science, that We are witnessing today in terms of a variety of social tensions – between different groups in terms of conflicts of interests, and between nations in terms of wars, – could be effectively dissolved and resolved in terms of harmony and peace, if these two great instruments of life, of asrama and varna, that the Hindu thinkers found out and practised, are adopted by all peoples with due modifications in accordance with modern life and in accordance with the specific regional conditions for each different group; if the theory of dharma which these two institutions manifested in the concrete is accepted by them; and if the dharma

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that defines human existence as an opportunity of self-understanding and self-conquest through a self-rendering life of service and devotion to duty runs incessantly through their hearts.

With such findings and belief, we may fittingly conclude this work with the memorable Bharata-Savitri verses with which the sage Vyasa concludes the writing of the Great Epic, the Maha-Bharata : –

“Raising up my hand,

I declare with all my might :

From dharma follow artha and kama ;  
Why not, then, practice dharma ?

However,

None pays heed to me !

But, be it remembered  
 That dharma should never be abandoned  
 To fulfil the demands of kama,  
 Or, through fear or avarice,  
 Or, even when one's life is at the stake ;  
 For,  
 Dharma is eternal,  
 While the joys and sorrows of life  
 Are but fleeting and transitory,  
 Even as the soul is eternal,  
 Though the means and instruments it uses  
 Are but frail and transient.” 10

16. Maha. Svarga. 5, 62-63.

Urdhva-bahur viraumyesha na cha ka\$chich-chhrui}oti me/  
 dharmdd arthas cha kamas cha sa kim-artham na sevyate /  
 na jatu kaman na bhaydn na lobhdd  
 dharmam tyajet jwitasydpi hetoh J  
 nityo dharmah sukha-duhkhe tvanitye  
 jivo nityo hetur asya tvanityah/ /

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